

# Ridgeway Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY342824
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Janice Clark
<b>Setting Address</b>	Bussage Village Hall, The Ridgeway, Bussage, Stroud, GL6 8BB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01453 883009
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Ridgeway Playgroup Limited
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ridgeway Playgroup is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status based in Bussage Village Hall. Three directors voluntarily oversee the running of the setting. The setting was registered in 2006 and was previously known as Eastcombe Playgroup. It is registered to provide sessional care for up to 20 children aged between two and five-years. There are currently 25 children on roll, of whom 22 are funded three and four-year-olds. The playgroup supports children who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

The playgroup operates weekdays except Wednesdays from 09.45 to 12.15, term-time only. The group has the use of the village hall, kitchen and toilet facilities and the garden.

There are three members of staff currently employed by the setting; one member of staff has an appropriate early years qualification and one is working towards this. The staff are supported by parent helpers, on a duty rota. The playgroup also receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children flourish in a clean, well maintained environment. They enjoy the benefits of a routine that ensures the appropriate balance of rest and play. The regular use of the outdoor play area and the good use of the indoor play space contribute to children's good health and the development of their large physical skills. For example, children enjoy fresh air and exercise daily in the spacious garden. They practise a wide range of physical skills as they confidently climb up and slide down large apparatus, crawl through a tunnel, balance on beams and stilts, peddle, push and manoeuvre wheeled toys. They develop co-ordination skills through using a wide range of equipment such as, balls, bats and hoops. In this way, children learn that exercise is a way to good health and this is further promoted through children finding out about how their bodies work.

Staff promote children's health through effective hygiene practice. They share a sensible exclusion policy with parents and this helps to minimise the spread of infection. Children are becoming increasingly independent in their self-help skills. They understand the reasons behind washing their hands and routinely do this before eating, after going to the toilet and messy play. Therefore, children learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care.

Children enjoy nutritious snacks and learn about healthy eating through a wide range of routines and activities. For example, children prepare snacks, grow vegetables in the garden and enjoy role play in a vegetable market stall. Snacks consist of fresh fruit, vegetables, crackers, cheese or cheesy biscuits. Staff consult parents regarding children's dietary and religious needs. They sit with the children in small groups during snack time and discuss what they have been doing in the setting and their home lives. This helps children to understand other people's life styles and assists in promoting good social skills.

### Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment. They grow in confidence because they are able to move around freely and unrestricted. Children play with bright, colourful toys that are safe and hygienic for their use. Staff set out the room before children arrive with different resources each day. These are easily accessible to children and this means that they can make independent choices in their play. Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff make thorough risk assessments of the outdoor and indoor area before the children arrive. For example, safety gates are in place at the steps leading to the stage and the entrance of the kitchen, electrical sockets are covered and the water in the bathroom is set at a safe temperature for children to use. Children learn to keep themselves and others safe through participating in fire practices and through taking care whilst using the climbing frame.

Staff take steps to safeguard and promote children's welfare. All staff have current first aid certificates and there is a well stocked first aid box on the premises. They have a satisfactory understanding of child protection in keeping with the Area Safeguarding Children Board. Most required documents and procedures regarding children's health and safety are in place and kept up-to-date. However, some lack necessary detail. The setting does not have a policy in place to inform staff of what action to take in the event of a child being lost. This compromises children's safety.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy and eager to come to the group and separate from the parents with confidence. Staff are very caring and treat children who are new to the group with sensitivity. Consequently, children respond well to them and this assists in building good relationships. Children enjoy fun, meaningful activities and staff use the Birth to three matters format to assess the progress of children under the age of three-years. Parents of this age group receive a detailed report of their children's progress before they move onto the Foundation Stage. This helps parents to understand their children's stage of development and what they are going to do next. All children participate in activities within the same topic although they are differentiated to support the younger children. They are able to choose from a wide range of bright, colourful toys, craft activities and tactile experiences. For example, they enjoy tactile experiences such as, clay, play dough, gloop, oats, sand and shells. Small world toys stimulate children's imagination as they role play with large vehicles, garages and a fire station. They call for assistance through a loud speaker attached to an 'SOS' station. Children fill trucks up with pasta shapes and create roads for them to drive through. A home corner, complete with play food, pots, pans, dishes and cutlery enables children to act out familiar experiences. A trolley full of construction materials is available to children and they use these items to build a house with furniture for their dolls.

Children enjoy playing in the spacious garden where they benefit from the wide range of physical activities offered. They bring their Wellington boots from home so that they can play out in all weather. Children grow and tend to vegetables and enjoy eating the end results. There is a play house, in the garden, that the staff have transformed into a garden centre for children to buy and sell plants. The garden overlooks the countryside and this further promotes children's understanding of growing, seasonal change and the natural world around them.

### **Nursery Education:**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones, as a result children enjoy a range of interesting, fun activities and experiences many of which are first hand. For example, children grow vegetables, explore and experiment with water. Staff are enthusiastic in their delivery of the curriculum, they instruct children as to what activities are available to them at the start of the session, interact well with the children, listen to them and question them appropriately. Consequently, children are eager to learn. Staff regularly observe and assess children's progress and learning. They record these observations appropriately and share them with parents. However, some assessments are not up-to-date. It is difficult therefore, for staff to use observations effectively to fully establish what the children should do next or to recognise gaps in the curriculum. As a result, children do not make regular and continuous progress in their learning. The planning system covers all areas of learning. Plans are informative as to the learning outcome of the activity and they show some levels of differentiation. However, some activities are not challenging enough for more able children. Consequently, children are not consistently engaged in activities. For instance, children get restless during large story times and circle time.

Children use language for thinking during a parachute game where they have to find treasure. This is an effective way of teaching children the sounds of letters as staff ask them to find an object beginning with the letter, for example, 'f' for fire engine. They take books home from the playgroup to share with their parents and in this way they begin to learn about the value

of books. Children begin to recognise their names and familiar words in a room that is full of print. They practise their writing skills using different media such as, sand. However, children do not regularly practise writing their names, use writing for a purpose in their play or have opportunities to speak out and to be listened to in large group situations.

Children learn to count and recognise numbers during circle time. They practise simple number rhymes, such as 'Ten fat sausages,' Staff reinforce maths language for example, through a game of opposites. Children learn about short and long, big and little, high and low as well as, hot and cold. Projects surrounding growing help children to compare sizes. Children copy and make up their own patterns using shape puzzles and construction sets. However, there are few opportunities for counting and regular problem solving in every day routines and activities.

Regular access to tills, telephones and a computer offer children opportunities to learn about information technology. This reinforces other areas of the curriculum. Children develop small manipulative skills through building with construction materials and during creative play. They use a range of media and experience a variety of art activities; such as, free painting, collage, printing, bubble painting and marbling. They are able to choose from a selection of materials to create items such as flowers and staff are very supportive in this area. However, many of children's art activities are pre-conceived and they are not always able to use their creative skills imaginatively. Therefore, children lack sufficient challenge in this area.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff provide a warm welcoming setting and they enjoy positive relationships with parents and children. Labelled displays of children's work, as well as an album of photographs, assist in promoting a positive self-image and a sense of belonging. Children become aware of the wider world through exploring festivals such as, Chinese New Year and Diwali. There are many resources that represent positive images of diversity in the setting to help children to appreciate the similarities and differences of others. For example, children look at books, play with dolls, play people and dressing-up clothes that reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability. Children learn about the community that they live in and the people who work and live there through visits from people who help them. For example, the community policeman and a nurse came to visit the children to talk about how they help people. The nurse brought 'Bisley' bear to talk about his experiences in hospital. Many of the parents of the children attending the group offer to help on duty rota and each bring their own experiences and talents.

Children are learning to share, take turns and to work together. For example, they share their snacks, take turns on the climbing frame and work co-operatively when using a parachute and tidying up toys and resources. Staff praise children for what they do well and this assists in promoting their self-esteem. However, children do not have clear behavioural boundaries. As a result, at times, some children can be disruptive. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are included in the group. The staff have a positive attitude towards working with the parents and outside agencies to ensure that they meet children's individual needs. Overall, the provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Parents and their children receive a home visit before they start at the setting. Staff encourage the parents to settle the children slowly into the group and they use this time to build positive relationships with all concerned. Parents receive comprehensive information about the setting prior to their child's starting date. Further information is available in the group. This leads to good communication and understanding which results in a happy, comfortable atmosphere for

children to play. There is a complaints policy in place however, this lacks necessary detail. Children also receive information about the group. This is in a picture format and offers them a clear insight of what to expect during their time at playgroup. This helps children to feel valued and included and also helps to eliminate any fears or anxieties. As a result, children are happy and confident to come to the group. Staff and parents share information daily regarding children's care and development. In addition the parents have the opportunity to write in a diary and this provides a two-way method of communication that enables both parties become aware of what is happening in a child's life. The setting welcomes and values parents views and there is a book available for them to write their comments. Parents find staff to be friendly, approachable and helpful. Thus, contributing to children's general well-being.

Partnership with parents of children in receipt of Funded Education is good. The parents receive good information about the Foundation Stage when they start at the group and then ongoing throughout their time in the setting. In addition the staff offer an information evening where they discuss the learning outcomes of activities offered to children. This assists parents to become more involved in their children's learning and to extend this into the home. Staff obtain useful information from the parents regarding children's development and learning and this assists them to build on what they already know as they enter the group. Children's assessments are shared with parents both formally and informally.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

An enthusiastic staff team work well to promote children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. There is an appropriate recruitment procedure in place to ensure that the people who care for the children are suitable to do so. Most policies and procedures are in place regarding children's safety and welfare although, some lack necessary detail. For example, the procedure to follow in the event of an allegation against a member of staff and the documents for recording the attendance of staff and children. The setting does not have a policy in place to inform staff of what action to take in the event of a child being lost. This is a breach of regulation. Staff organise space well in the setting to offer children a broad range of activities. However, at times, some areas become cluttered due to too many resources out at the one time. Children benefit from a stable staff team and parents who are actively involved in the setting. This provides children with plenty of adult attention that helps to support their care learning and play. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. Staff meet regularly to plan activities and in addition they spend time before and after the session to discuss children's progress. Parent helpers are given instructions as to the learning outcome of each activity. This, as well as a dedicated staff team, contributes to children enjoying interesting and fun activities that contribute to their learning. Staff are keen to extend their knowledge of childcare through further training and development and this is reflected in their practice. They are committed to further improving their practice and are seeking ways to do this. For example, they are receiving support from the local authority. However, the system for monitoring and evaluating the programme for nursery education has failed to identify gaps in the curriculum. As a result, this hinders children's progress and attainment in some areas of learning.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

This is the group's first inspection in the name of Ridgeway Playgroup. Therefore, there have been no previous care recommendations for this registration.

However, at the last inspection of nursery education for the provision two recommendations were made. These were to continue to develop the use of assessments to inform future planning. To ensure that learning intentions are clear and that all adults involved in the delivery of the curriculum are aware of how to support children in their learning. In addition, staff were asked to consider different ways to involve parents in their children's learning and to enable parents to see their children's progress over time.

These recommendations have been partly addressed. For example, parents now receive helpful information about the Foundations Stage and the stepping stones and this area is now good and parents are able to extend children's learning into the home. Staff offer parents, on duty, and volunteers helpful advice as to how they can support children's learning. Although the staff have worked very hard to improve the provision for nursery education, the system used to assess children's progress and learning still requires further attention as detailed in the report.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop a policy that informs staff of the procedure to follow in the event of a child being lost
- establish clear boundaries for behaviour
- ensure that all documentation meets the required National Standards

## **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further evaluate and maintain the children's assessment and development records to ensure that they are used to inform the planning of children's future learning opportunities, in particular challenges for more able children
- further develop the system to assess the strengths and weaknesses in the education provision to ensure gaps are highlighted and actioned

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