



Plymtree Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106012
Inspection date	30 June 2005
Inspector	Heather Morgan
Setting Address	Plymtree Village Hall, Cullompton, Devon, EX15 2JE
Telephone number	MOB 07779063177
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Registered person	Plymtree Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

Plymtree Playgroup opened over 20 years ago and operates from the village hall in Plymtree, near Cullompton. It is managed by a committee and serves the village of Plymtree and the surrounding area. The premises offer a large hall with smaller ante-room, kitchen and toilet facilities. Children have some access to the adjoining tennis court for outdoor play and also visit the local park.

A maximum of 14 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup

is open each weekday from 0915 to 1145 during school term time only.

There are currently 17 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 14 receive funding for nursery education. They currently support children with special educational needs.

There are six part-time members of staff, one of whom holds a relevant qualification, and another is working towards one.

The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and accesses support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership through attendance at cluster meetings with the Foundation Stage Advisory Team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about good hygiene through daily routines and themed activities. They are developing healthy eating habits, eating nutritious snacks and learning about which foods are good for them. Their individual needs are met well as staff provide additional drinks and snacks when children recognise feelings of thirst and hunger.

Staff are able to provide appropriate care to children in the case of accidents as they keep their first aid qualifications up to date and have an accessible first aid kit. Continuity of care is generally supported well as staff request parental permission to seek medical support if necessary; they keep a written record of any accidents that occur and ensure parents countersign these records to demonstrate that information has been shared promptly.

Children are encouraged to take regular exercise to support their physical development, and enjoy a range of indoor and outdoor games and activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from playing in well-maintained premises which are organised effectively to provide clear play areas, with room to move safely between different activities. Staff regularly monitor the play areas and sweep up sand and playdough to limit the risk of children slipping over. Children are learning simple rules to keep themselves safe, such as keeping wheeled toys in a separate area and developing road safety awareness when they walk to the local park and school. Although there are appropriate security measures in place, staff do not always check that procedures are followed and the premises are not always secure. As a result, there is a risk that children could leave the premises unsupervised, or that unknown persons could access the building. Children's safety is further compromised as adults take hot drinks into the play area. Staff have a basic awareness of child protection issues, but

lack sufficient confidence or experience to implement the procedures to effectively promote the welfare of children in the event of any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, generally settle well and enjoy warm interactions with staff. They participate in a wide range of activities that support their progress and development. Their welfare and care is promoted appropriately as staff know them well and respond to their individual needs and requests. Children receive support from staff if they are struggling to separate from their carers at the beginning of each session.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children are making progress in all six areas of learning. Staff have a fair understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and they plan and offer a range of activities that interest the children and support their learning. However, current systems for planning and assessing children's progress lack sufficient detail. Consequently, all adults working with the children are not always clear about specific learning intentions and opportunities are missed to extend and challenge children. Insufficient attention is paid to tracking individual children's progress along the stepping stones in order to plan what they need to learn next and ensure that their learning builds on what they already know and can do.

Staff sometimes miss opportunities to extend children's learning through everyday routines and naturally arising situations. For example, they do not regularly develop counting skills or use activities such as calculating the number of chairs needed to accommodate all children present to introduce practical problem solving; children's independence is not developed by encouraging them to tackle new tasks such as pouring their own drinks at snack time. Children use writing and drawing materials enthusiastically, but are not encouraged to attempt mark-making for different purposes, for example, to write shopping lists when engaging in role-play. Topic based plans offer children opportunities to explore different features of their own and the wider environment. They are able to explore natural and made materials and to design and build models using a range of resources. However, they have limited access to equipment that develops their awareness of the different uses of technology. They enjoy exploring and experimenting with different craft materials to create pictures and models in two and three dimensions, but are not regularly encouraged to develop their freedom of expression in different ways, such as through dance and music and some activities are over-directed by adults, resulting in an expectation of achieving a pre-conceived end result.

Children use language well to organise their play, for example explaining rules to each other and engaging co-operatively in imaginative play. They use a range of tools and equipment, such as drawing and painting materials, dough cutters and scissors, with increasing control and confidence. They are developing good hand-eye co-ordination and small muscle skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children participate enthusiastically in activities, play well together and are developing close friendships with their peers. They confidently select resources for themselves and enjoy warm relationships with staff. This gives them the confidence to seek additional help or support when needed, for example asking for additional drink or snacks if they are thirsty or hungry, or requesting particular resources that are stored in a cupboard. However, some opportunities are missed to develop children's independence by, for example, encouraging them to pour their own drinks or prepare their own snacks.

Children with special educational needs are supported well as staff liaise effectively with parents and other professionals to develop individual play plans. These are used well to promote children's steady progress and support them in accessing the range of activities offered.

Children's behaviour is generally good and they respond well to the praise and encouragement offered by staff. They are developing an awareness of rules that help them share resources and take turns in order to play harmoniously. However, they have not yet developed their own strategies for negotiating minor conflicts and sometimes have a tendency to become boisterous during whole group activities.

There is a good partnership with parents which has a positive impact on children's learning. Parents are kept informed about children's daily progress and achievements through the use of contact books. However, they receive limited information about the activities children participate in and how they support learning in the different areas of the curriculum. This limits their opportunities to make contributions to the assessment of their children's progress. Children benefit from the additional adult support parents provide when they help out at daily sessions or accompany the group on visits. Children's individual care needs are met well as there is effective communication between staff and parents. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, the playgroup meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care and nursery education. Sessions are well-organised and run smoothly. Children's continuity of care is supported by the effective communication between the two part-time supervisors. A range of policies and procedures are in place, which support staff in providing satisfactory care for children. However, the use of some regulatory documentation is not implemented effectively to ensure that all information regarding children is kept confidential and that staff have appropriate systems in place to record the administration of medication in order to safeguard children and support their continuity of care. Daily registers do not include a record of the times of children's attendance to support staff in ensuring the safety and security of children in the event of emergencies.

Leadership and management of the playgroup is satisfactory. Staff work well together and demonstrate a good commitment to improvement. They access relevant training and share new ideas to improve practice. At present, the lack of detail in the planning of activities and assessment of children's progress limits the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluating delivery of the nursery education curriculum. The group does not have good procedures in place for identifying their strengths and weaknesses in order to drive the development of the group as a whole or to support individual children's progress.

Improvements since the last inspection

The playgroup has made some progress in addressing the actions, recommendations and issues raised at their previous inspection. There is now a written medicine procedure which gives clear guidance on the safe administration of medication, but there is no system in place to record this. Accident and incident books are now available, completed appropriately and countersigned by parents to promote children's continuity of care. Staff have tried several different methods of assessing and recording children's progress and continue to explore more efficient and effective ways of doing this in order to track children's development and plan their next steps for learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- ensure the security of the premises at all times
- develop all staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues
- improve the use of documentation to ensure that confidentiality is maintained, recording systems are in place to implement the medication procedure and

that children's times of attendance are recorded

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):

- continue to develop planning procedures to ensure that staff are clear about the learning intentions of activities in order to support all children in making steady progress in the six areas of learning
- continue to develop the assessment procedures to track children's progress along the stepping stones; use this information to plan what children need to learn next
- ensure staff make good use of everyday routines and naturally arising situations to extend children's learning

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