

East Coker Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	507986
Inspection date	26 April 2007
Inspector	Samantha Powis

Setting Address	East Coker Sports Pavillion, Long Furlong Lane, East Coker, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 9LQ
Telephone number	07798 812540
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Registered person	East Coker Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

East Coker Playgroup is a committee run setting which has been established since 1973. It operates from the Sports Pavilion in the village of East Coker, on the south side of Yeovil. It serves the village, surrounding rural areas and the suburbs of Yeovil. Accommodation includes a main playroom with kitchen facilities, a smaller playroom, toilets and storage facilities. There is a concrete outdoor play area under a veranda and a large sports field for children to use.

The Playgroup is open Monday to Friday in term time from 09.00 to 12:00 with a lunch time session from 12:00 to 13:00 and afternoon sessions from 13:00 to 15:00. They also offer breakfast and after school sessions on some days. In the school holidays the group organises sessions according to the demand for places.

The Playgroup is registered to care for 24 children aged from two to under eight years. There are currently 45 children on the register, 39 of these children are in receipt of nursery education funding. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

There are nine staff employed to work with the children. All staff either hold or are working towards a level 2 or 3 qualification in childcare. The group has links with the local Early Years Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning to keep themselves healthy as they develop regular routines such as washing their hands before eating. They know that they have to put their empty cup in a special bowl once they have had a drink from it, and understand that they need to wash their hands to get rid of any germs. They are also protected from the risk of infection by a clear sickness policy, which informs parents that they should keep children at home when they are ill. This all helps to prevent the spread of infection.

Staff are well qualified in first aid and learn about administering specific medications in emergencies, which helps to promote children's welfare. However, the first aid kit is basic and the contents is not frequently checked. Records used to detail any accidents or administered medications are in place, however, these are not sufficiently detailed to ensure children's ongoing health is fully supported.

Children are developing a healthy lifestyle as they are regularly encouraged to play outdoors, benefiting from being out in the fresh air and having the opportunity to exercise. They notice the effect exercise has on their bodies, particularly on warm days, and help themselves to a drink to quench their thirst.

Children are also developing healthy eating habits as they enjoy nutritious snacks of fresh fruit. They drink either milk or water with their snack. At lunch time, children eat packed lunches which they bring from home and staff help them choose savoury items before eating any sweet items.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are offered a great deal of opportunities to learn about safety through their play. They use simple road signs when playing with the wheeled vehicles and are made aware of safe practices through planned activities. For example, children help to make a list of safety rules in the autumn in relation to bonfire night.

Although the staff supervise the children well as they play indoors, the risks when children play outside are not fully assessed. On occasions there is only one member of staff outside with the children, in an area which is not totally secure. The premises are checked visually on a daily basis, however, this system is not fully effective in identifying hazards. For example, some cleaning products are accessible in the open access kitchen area, which poses a risk to children's safety.

The resources which children have access to are well maintained and in generally good condition as staff constantly check them as they are used. Space is used well to promote the children's safety. Children and staff have regular opportunities to practice the group's fire drill, which means they are able to evacuate the building in an emergency very quickly.

Children's welfare is supported as staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and are familiar with the appropriate procedures to follow in the event of any concerns. However, the policy used to support staff, should an allegation be made, lacks some detail to ensure consistency.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are happy, relaxed and busy at the playgroup. They have opportunities to choose from a wide range of activities at each session. They settle quickly on arrival demonstrating their confidence in the daily routines. They are able to play alone, in small groups and in whole group situations. The individual needs of the children are considered when planning activities and routines, which ensures they are well supported in both their care and learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is Good. The children participate enthusiastically in the broad range of fun activities on offer. These offer support for children's learning throughout each of the six curriculum areas. Children have high levels of confidence and self-esteem as they receive frequent praise and encouragement from the staff. They are developing excellent relationships with adults and other children and through staff acting as good role models and supporting children through discussion, they are learning to negotiate and share responsibility. For example, in the role play area children take turns at being the police officer or the nurse, confident that their turn will come. Resources are stored well and labelled clearly to allow children easy independent access. The children are confident communicators. They listen very well to a visitor who has come to talk to them about her special hearing dog, and ask thoughtful questions to extend their understanding. They have many opportunities to engage in mark making and use books. They listen with enjoyment to stories told to them. The children are making good progress in their learning. Children are supported by caring staff who have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of children's development in general. Staff are actively involved in children's play throughout the session and are skilful at knowing when to step in and when to step back to support children's development. They are constantly encouraging children to think through ideas and asking questions of the children to take their learning forward.

Children's awareness of letter sounds and shapes is developing well, as they are encouraged to think of other words beginning with similar sounds at group times. They frequently see words being written on the white board, and notice those which are familiar to them, such as in their own name. They count as they play independently and frequently use counting and numbers for practical activities. They are challenged to solve simple problems which encourages their understanding of number pattern and order. For example, they compare the number of chairs to the number of children at snack time to see if they have too many or not enough. Maximum benefit is made of the playgroups rural situation, and children enjoy the many opportunities they have to observe changes within their environment. They are inquisitive, and ask questions about how things work. Staff involve them in fitting new batteries in equipment and looking at why something doesn't work, which helps them to develop their understanding. Children use a broad range of tools and materials which encourages their small muscles to become strong, improving control. Although children have plenty of opportunities to engage in play to promote their large physical skills, this is less well planned for and means that some children are not fully encouraged to build on their existing skills. Children enjoy access to a variety of materials to use creatively, paints are always available, and opportunities to use

materials such as clay, paper mache, wood and fabric allow them to freely make their own models or pictures. Opportunities to develop an awareness of the wider world are offered. For example, the children take part in an "African Art" project during the year, with visiting teachers joining the setting to share their skills to benefit the children.

Children benefit from the staff planning a broad curriculum which is based on the children's needs. Assessment records are used to inform future plans, which means that children are well supported in most areas. Staff establish information from parents about children's starting points when they enter the playgroup, and continue to exchange information during the child's time at the nursery to reflect children's learning at home and playgroup.

The routine of the session provides children with opportunities to play both indoors and outdoors, to initiate activities themselves and to participate in planned, adult-led experiences. Staff are confident to allow the curriculum to be led by the children. For example, the children currently attending are very keen on role play, therefore, staff are using these opportunities to develop and extend children's learning throughout all six curriculum areas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident, separate easily from their parents and carers and settle well. They have a strong sense of belonging due to being welcomed into a setting which is full of displays of their own art work. Staff ensure that they gather detailed information when new children start and encourage a settling in period to help them meet each families individual needs. There are effective systems in place to support children with learning difficulties. Staff have developed good links with other professionals and work closely with parents to develop consistent strategies to support children's development. Children are developing an awareness of their own community and of the diversity within society. This is promoted through the frequent visitors who are invited into the playgroup to share their knowledge. Children also have daily access to a range of equipment and resources such as books, puzzles and posters which support this.

Children's behaviour is very good. They are learning to take turns and share resources and respond well to the staff's regular use of praise and encouragement to reward their good behaviour. A positive behaviour management policy is implemented to support children in learning how to manage their own behaviour. Clear explanations are given and support is offered to negotiate turn taking and sharing. As a result, children are generally caring and considerate towards each other and play very well together. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They are encouraged to share information about their children when they first start at the playgroup, to help staff support children in settling in and to promote children's learning and development. Parents feel able to discuss their child's progress with any member of the welcoming staff team. Some information is given to parents about the activities that are planned for their children and about the Foundation Stage curriculum in general. This gives them ideas as to how they can support and extend their child's learning at home. Information about children's individual needs is regularly updated, which helps to promote consistency and continuity of care, and ensures any wishes of parents are respected. Families receive a welcome booklet when they start, which includes information about the group's policies and procedures.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are settled and making good progress in their learning. This is due to the familiar routines and the support offered from a well established team of staff, all of whom are qualified or working towards a qualification. The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Although Ofsted have been informed of the change in committee, they have not yet instigated necessary checks for these individuals. Current staff have been checked to ensure their suitability, however, there is no written procedure to follow when appointing new staff to ensure a consistent approach in line with current legislation. This means that children's ongoing safety cannot be assured. There are a range of policies and procedures in place, however, not all written procedures have been updated to reflect current practice, in particular, those relating to complaints and child protection. Policies and practices regarding safety and the use of documents to support children's health are not always effective in supporting children's well-being fully.

Leadership and management are good. The playgroup leader is a good role model for other staff and provides support where it is needed during the sessions. A basic staff appraisal system is in place and used to identify training needs. Staff are encouraged to attend a wide range of training opportunities to develop their practice, and use regular meetings to share what they have learned. There is a commitment to improvement throughout the team of staff and committee. All of the staff contribute towards producing activity plans which are currently under review to ensure they are successful in meeting the needs of all the children attending. The playgroup leader monitors the plans and works with the rest of the staff to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are covered.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the setting was asked to review their procedures for recording administered medication and increase the information held on each child to include persons authorised to collect children from the setting.

Although the medication records have been developed, some of these fail to include accurate details. Therefore, they are not fully successful in ensuring that children's ongoing health needs are met. Children's individual records of information are updated regularly, which means that information about emergency contacts and those authorised to collect the children is always available to promote children's safety and well-being.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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.

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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 accident and medication records are sufficiently detailed to promote children's ongoing health
- assess the risks to children in relation to use of the outdoor area and storage of cleaning resources and take action to minimise these
- review and develop policies and procedures to ensure they reflect current legislation, with particular reference to the procedures to be followed when recruiting and vetting new staff or committee members, the complaints procedure and child protection policy.

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):

- plan further opportunities to develop children's large physical skills.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk