

Shekinah Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113694
Inspection date	15 June 2007
Inspector	Christine McNally
Setting Address	Western Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, BN43 5WD
Telephone number	01273 461283
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Registered person	Trustees of Shekinah 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 good. 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?

Shekinah playgroup opened in 1980. The playgroup operates from two rooms in the Baptist church, which is located in Shoreham-by-sea, it serves the local community and surrounding areas. The playgroup is managed by the supervisors, with the pastor of the Baptist church being the registered provider. There are currently 36 children on roll, of these 26 receive funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The group opens four morning sessions a week and one afternoon session, during school term time. Sessions are from 09:30-12:00 and from 13:00-15:30 on a Thursday. The group is closed on a Wednesday. There are six members of staff, of these four hold appropriate childcare qualifications, one is currently undertaking a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 and the other has good experience of working with children. The pre-school receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet their physical, nutritional and health needs. Children learn good personal hygiene practices such as when they should wash their hands and why. Good arrangements are in place for dealing with sickness and accidents minimising the risk of the spread of infection.

Children enjoy plenty of exercise which is good for their health. A stimulating variety of activities helps children gain increasing control of their bodies for example, as they climb over and through the climbing frame or as they pour dry sand from container to container. Children particularly enjoy creative physical play, for instance as they pretend to surf while playing at the 'beach' area set up as part of the Australia topic.

Children experience a range of healthy snacks including toast and fruit encouraging them to develop healthy eating practices. However, the organisation of snack time is less effective than the rest of the session. Children are not offered opportunities to be involved in the preparation of snack or to pour drinks for themselves. They do not sit at tables but in two small circles, on seats, and come up to collect their toast and then their drink, this means they are unable to enjoy their drink along with their snack.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their play in an safe environment where staff use risk assessments well to reduce potential hazards. Children benefit from plenty of space which is adequately organised, allowing children to move around safely, freely and independently. Children use a range of good quality toys and resources; these are well maintained and appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Children begin to learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe as they practise fire evacuation procedures. They learn about safety through staff's clear and simple explanations as to why a rule is in place, for example they know not to run inside, as they might fall and hurt themselves.

Children are safeguarded by staff that have a clear understanding of child protection policies and procedures. There is a clearly written policy which is shared with the parents. All of these measures contribute to the safety and welfare of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and relaxed in playgroup; they readily approach staff for support indicating good trusting relationships. Children arrive happy and eager to participate, enjoying their time at the playgroup. The playgroup operates a free play session which means children are able to select their own activities. Staff are accomplished in extending children's learning and they are extremely well motivated by the challenges set throughout the day. Staff support children extremely well in their chosen activities; they are also skilled in being able to encourage children to participate in specific activities. Children show considerable independence as they

make choices about the toys and resources they want to play with. A wide range of appropriate resources and activities promotes children's development.

Children are interested in the activities available and spend time concentrating on self-chosen activities. Staff encourage children to play together and share. Lots of praise and encouragement develops children's self-esteem. Children are offered opportunities to progress in all areas of development. They enjoy continuous play opportunities like construction, small world toys, role play, sand, and books. Children also participate in structured activities, for example, making Father's Day cards.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones. As a result, children enjoy a range of stimulating and interesting activities and experiences. A worthwhile range of relevant activities related to their needs motivates children. They access a wide range of well-chosen resources, which support their progress across all areas of learning. Planning is good, links clearly to the stepping stones and ensures a wide range of activities and experiences are provided to extend children's learning. Observations and assessments are used to help inform the planning. Children flourish as the balance between adult and child-led activities allows them to learn at their own pace. Staff encourage children to make decisions and to self-select resources and equipment.

Children are developing an awareness of others' needs and have good self-esteem because staff listen to them and value their ideas and contributions. Staff and children alike laugh together and enjoy very good relationships helping to support their personal development extremely well. All children are eager to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. Children develop a healthy interest in books, they enjoy sharing stories with adults and peers and delight in predictable endings. They are confident speakers and readily share their thoughts and experiences during circle time, staff give good encouragement to the other children to listen carefully. They are confident speakers, and understand they can use writing for a variety of purposes and are beginning to write for themselves. Children skilfully use and recognise numbers in everyday activities. Children count confidently and recognise numbers that are important to them. They choose number activities during free play and enjoy number rhymes and songs.

Topic work and practical activities arouses children's natural curiosity and develops their exploration and investigation skills. They learn about nature and the man-made environment as they study topics, such as Weather and Our Town. Children move confidently showing a good awareness of space and others as they move around the playgroup and as they play on the large physical equipment. Imagination is well fostered through interesting imaginative play areas, such as the 'Australian beach'. Children are creative in their thinking and love to re-tell stories and share their experiences. Children enjoy participating in messy and creative activities and will independently choose these activities for themselves. They paint and draw with a purpose in mind, taking great pride in their work. Modelling material, such as play dough, is regularly available for children to experiment and create freely.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are greeted warmly by staff who ask how they are and what they have been doing at home. This helps them feel secure and develop a sense of belonging. Children are encouraged

to select their own activities, learning to make their own decisions. Staff respect parents wishes with regard to any individual needs, helping to promote the children's self-esteem. Children are developing an awareness of their own and other cultures through a range of resources, planned activities and as they celebrate a variety of festivals. Staff have a positive attitude to working with children identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their families.

Children behave very well, care for each other and freely share and take turns. Staff give good encouragement, for example, when playing at the 'balloon game', the children take turns and follow the simple rules of cooperation. They are developing a good understanding of right and wrong and are able to play happily together. Staff set consistent boundaries for children which helps them learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children gain confidence as staff acknowledge them as important individuals.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff build excellent relationships with parents and work closely with them to ensure that children's individual needs are met. This good partnership contributes considerably to children's well-being while at the playgroup. Staff are friendly and approachable they ensure that all parents know how their children are progressing and developing. Children's learning is enhanced from this sharing of information between staff and parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel at home and are at ease in the well-organised environment. Children benefit from being cared for by staff that are qualified and experienced in childcare. All staff members have a good knowledge and understanding of children's developmental needs. All children receive good support from a staff group that enjoy their company and know them well helping them feel secure and confident.

Leadership and management of the funded nursery education is good. Systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the educational programme. Staff are actively encouraged to enrol on relevant courses; this supports staff in their role and ensures they have the latest and most relevant information available.

The staff team work well together, they have a vision of where they are going with the playgroup and have put in place systems to help them achieve their goals. Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. All aspects of the children's care and learning are discussed with the parents, who are kept well informed of their child's achievements. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the previous nursery education inspection the setting has introduced a formal appraisal system to develop staff's individual practice further. This has resulted in support for the staff in planning, observation and record keeping. Staff regularly make written observations of children's achievements, which are transferred to the children's Foundation Stage profile records. This helps to support children in progressing in their learning and development.

Following the last care inspection the playgroup developed all staff's knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children procedures. They have included in their complaints

procedure details of the Ofsted address and telephone number. Both these measures contribute to the care and welfare of the children.

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):

- evaluate the organisation of snack time so that it is more meaningful for the children; consider how children are seated and what it is hoped they will gain from snack time (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- make improvements as indicated in the care section above

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