

# Upton St Leonards Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101748
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jennifer Read
<b>Setting Address</b>	10 Bondend Road, Upton St. Leonards, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL4 8AG
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<b>Registered person</b>	Upton St Leonards Playgroup
<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?

Upton St Leonard's Playgroup was founded in 1966 and is run by a voluntary management committee of parents. The playgroup operates from Upton St Leonard's Village Hall and serves the communities of Abbeydale, Abbeymead and Upton St Leonard's. The areas available to the playgroup include two halls, a kitchen and associated facilities. There is a fully enclosed outside area with hard-standing surface. The attached playing field is used as an additional play area.

A maximum of 26 children from two years nine months to five years may attend at any one time. There are currently 50 children on roll. Of these, 30 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery is open each weekday during school terms. Monday to Wednesday sessions from 09:30 to 12:00 cater for a mixed aged group; sessions on a Monday and Wednesday from 13:00 to 14:45 cater for the youngest children; pre-school sessions operate on Thursday and Friday from 09:30 to 12:30. The playgroup supports a number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The playgroup employs four staff. Both playgroup leaders hold appropriate childcare qualifications. All staff have completed first aid, child protection and food hygiene training. A

long standing volunteer, caretaker and parent helpers support the playgroup. Upton St Leonard's Playgroup is a member of the local Playgroup and Toddlers Association.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Excellent practical activities, well-thought through topics, such as, 'hands up to hygiene', 'all about our bodies' and effective questioning from staff are enhancing children's sound awareness of the importance of hand washing, good health, healthy food and regular exercise. Children have a thorough understanding of their personal care and describe with clarity how hand washing prevents germs from going down into their tummy and making them poorly. Painting dots on their hand then shaking hands with their peers cleverly shows children how germs spread. Children benefit from the staff's good example and suitable cleaning routines, for instance, wearing gloves when preparing and helping serve the snack and during cooking activities. The clear accessible health and safety policy, helpful information about illnesses and infections, together with the staff's knowledge and experience, ensure children are very well protected from infection.

The enthusiastic staff encourage children to develop independence in their personal care and help them to make healthy choices. They learn to appreciate healthy food and enjoy activities that enable them to discuss healthy options with staff, such as tasting a wide range of ingredients during the topic senses and exploring different foods from around the world. Children take pleasure in selecting snacks from a broad and varied range of fresh or dried fruit, vegetables and bread sticks. They enjoy the rolling snack bar and preparing their own sandwiches. This enhances children's enjoyment of food. They readily access water from the urn throughout the session and confidently pour their own drinks when eating their snack. This ensures children are well hydrated and actively encourages their independence.

Children are developing a good understanding of healthy living and how to look after their bodies. They are learning about ways to keep themselves fit and enjoy daily opportunities to develop large muscle control. For example, in the garden area they use balls and bats with increasing accuracy and skill, in the hall they climb, balance, crawl and play games using a variety of equipment and apparatus and on the field they practise their running and sports day activities. However, children have no access to tricycles and wheeled toys to develop their pedalling skills. Pre-school children show increasing control over their clothing and fastenings as they change for weekly exercise sessions. During these sessions children are encouraged to be aware of what is happening to their bodies as they, warm up, exercise and cool down.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a welcoming, sufficiently clean and secure environment where their safety and security is given high priority. Play areas are bright, cheerful and spacious with clearly defined areas such as book corner, computer area, graphics area and creative area. Nicely presented displays and activities create an appealing and stimulating environment. However, current storage facilities are limited and there is no provision for children to select toys and equipment for themselves to promote their independent learning. Children can easily access necessary items like paper towels or their coats, which are on child-height coat pegs. Children play happily

with a generally good range of resources, although ride on toys are not available to enhance their physical skills.

Daily safety checks and detailed risk assessments ensure hazards to children are effectively minimised. Staff monitor visitors to the setting effectively and supervise the entrance successfully to ensure the safe arrival and collection of children. They supervise the children closely indoors and out because a high number of adults present each session ensures they are able to respond swiftly to prevent accidents. Children display a growing understanding of how to keep themselves safe through regular visits from the road safety officer and useful activities and discussion from staff. Children develop their understanding of road safety well through regular walks. They describe with clarity how they must hold an adults hand and look both ways when crossing the road.

Adequate procedures are in place to ensure children are cared for by suitable adults. Children are well protected from abuse or neglect because some staff have valuable experience and professional knowledge of child protection issues. All staff have completed child protection training and although the policy does not include reference to reporting allegations to the regulator, staff are clear about their responsibilities to observe, monitor, record and report should they have any concerns about a child in their care.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children readily participate in a broad range of stimulating activities to support and encourage their interests and experiences. Although children seldom contribute to the planning, all children throughout the week enjoy the same experiences and topic-based activities. Staff demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and make occasional reference to aspects in the planning. Daily observations and informative assessments provide staff and parents with useful information about children's progress. However, these do not link to the planning to ensure children's individual needs and interests are well met.

Children enjoy many visitors to the setting, including, guide dogs, the wildlife officer and professionals from the emergency sector. This extends children's experiences and their awareness of people who help us. Children are happy and settle well because staff greet them warmly on arrival. Subsequently, children confidently go off to play with their friends. They gain confidence and self-esteem because staff offer valuable support and interact well with children during play and adult-led activities.

Children are developing a greater understanding of being part of a bigger social group. They readily join in large and small group activities, such as, story time, adult-led activities and registration time where they count the number of adults and children present each day. Children spend their time purposefully selecting activities from those already set out by the staff. However, they have very few opportunities to instigate their own play and extend it further due to limited access to toys and play materials. This limits children's decision making skills and independent learning. Children enjoy role-play and exploring the sand, water and play dough. They enjoy experimenting with the paint using their fingers, straws, boots, sponges and various objects to create different effects with the paint.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making sound progress because staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and demonstrate generally good understanding of how children learn. Consequently, children are suitably challenged because staff have sufficient expectations, which are well balanced with lots of individual support and praise. Planning covers all areas of learning generally well, although short term plans do not link to the assessments or children's next steps in their learning to effectively meet the needs of individual children. Also, children have few opportunities to contribute to planning and take an active part in organising their play. As a result, children show little autonomy in their play and learning. Observations are completed occasionally but do not consistently link to the assessments to give staff a clear record of achievement. As a result, some assessments do not reflect an accurate record of attainment. However, the staff know the children well and provide a broad range of topic based activities that are stimulating and help engage the children in purposeful learning.

Staff demonstrate a high degree of skill and understanding of how to support those children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. All children respond well to staff involvement in their play and learning and are keen to include them in their role-play and other activities. For example, when playing in the home corner, farm shop, doctors surgery or African Tepee. All children are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other and staff. They are encouraged to develop independence by assisting with tidying their play resources, helping themselves to drinks and managing their personal care. They participate in fundraising events, care for their environment by helping with planting and watering and care for each other. For instance, when an older child is helping to put the play food away he says to a younger child, 'I'm big, I can help you'.

All children recognise their written names and refer to these when self-registering each day, finding their coat pegs or having their snack. Children have good opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills both in adult-led and free-play activities. For example, chalking in the garden, making appointments, shopping lists and menus in the role-play and using the computer keyboard to find letters to represent their names to print on their pictures. Children show a growing awareness of letters and letter sounds through many daily activities and routines, such as, guessing the name on the money pot when staff ask, 'whose name begins with J?'. Children readily share news about events in their lives and enjoy sharing books and stories. During book week children bring in their favourite books to share and dress up in their favourite characters to bring the stories to life for the children.

Children use their growing knowledge of number, shape and size to identify shapes in the environment, hearing and using new words introduced by staff during the shape walk, for example, 'semi-circle'. Children have daily opportunities to count beyond ten and predict what comes next when talking about the day and date. They use mathematical language spontaneously in their play, match and calculate with increasing confidence and accuracy. Effective questioning, such as, 'where's the middle?', 'where's the top?' is supporting children's awareness of positional language.

Children confidently use a range of everyday technology in their play and planned activities. For example, they use the interactive Roamer to devise routes and show avid interest in the computer, operating the mouse, completing simple programmes and learning how to print out their pictures and pieces of work. Children are starting to understand about the passing of time as they identify the day of the week, month, year, season and talk about yesterday and tomorrow. Children make a bus from recycled materials and readily explore a range of natural objects and construction sets daily.

All children enjoy a wide and varied range of creative activities, which stimulate their interest and increase their awareness of texture and use of different resources. For example, children paint for a purpose and as a free-play activity, where they discover what happens when they mix the different colours together on their hands or create three-dimensional structures with the clay. They play imaginatively and engage in role-play based on their own first-hand experiences or topic related themes. For example, a child uses the available resources saying, 'this is my baby's new costume' as she irons the clothes for her dolly.

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

The provision is good.

Children become aware of the wider society and benefit from well-planned activities and useful resources which help them value diversity. For instance, Children look at and show interest in artefacts, dressing-up clothes and musical instruments from a range of cultures, such as, Diwali, Africa and Chinese New Year. Good use of the local community supports children's learning and extends their experiences. Children wear their key group colour tee-shirts and sweat tops with the playgroup logo with pride. This helps children feel a strong sense of themselves and a valued member of the playgroup. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's individual care needs are generally well met because staff liaise closely with parents and identify and record useful information to provide suitable care. Staff use their experience and sound knowledge of the care of children with learning difficulties or disabilities to support the inclusion of all children. Effective multi-agency meetings, detailed individual educational programmes and competent adult support is successfully supporting and enhancing children's learning.

Children are confident, know the routines well and show suitable awareness of the rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour. They respond positively to frequent praise for recognition of achievements and readily participate in group praise. Therefore, valuing each others good work and behaviour. Consequently, children are generally well behaved. Children play co-operatively together, share and take turns with toys and activities, for example, on the computer. The use of open-ended questions, clear explanations and consistent, calm support is helping children to manage their own behaviour.

Children benefit from the friendly relationships and informal contact between their parents and the staff. This helps to provide the children with continuity of care between home and the playgroup. Parents value the individual family support, friendliness of the staff and informative and detailed information about the topics, activities and their children's progress. The notice boards are resourceful and provide parents with helpful information about snacks, policies and procedures, planning for the different groups of children and additional practical information about the setting. This ensures parents are well-informed.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive good quality information about the Foundation stage curriculum and their children's progress through regular parent meetings, termly progress reports and regular involvement in the group. Excellent displays around the room provide parents with valuable information about what children have been learning about and how this links to the stepping stones. Monthly newsletters about the weekly topics also includes detail about intended learning and helpful ideas for activities at home. This enables parents to take an active part in the playgroup and their children's learning both at the group and at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The clear management structure is well-established, supports staff appropriately in their personal development and has positive impact on children's progress. Subsequently, children are making sound progress in their learning. The joint play leaders are motivated to move the playgroup forward and help staff to work well together as a team to ensure that the setting runs smoothly. As a result, there is a strong team spirit. Twice weekly meetings, yearly appraisals and suitable access to relevant training, promotes playgroup practice and the successful integration of care and nursery education.

The committee are supportive of staff and value their drive and enthusiasm. The setting reviews the quality of the provision, practice and children's progress and takes sufficient steps to address identified weaknesses. However, the monitoring of children's assessments and ensuring these link to the planning is not consistent, meaning a number of key worker assessments are not up-to-date or do not include key information about children's next steps in their learning.

The children benefit from careful organisation of play areas and deployment of staff. Volunteers, parent helpers and the caretaker support the staff and children extremely well. For example, helping to set out and clear away the toys and equipment daily. However, the limits on storage is affecting children's learning because the purchasing of additional resources has been put on hold and the organisation of current toys and equipment does not actively encourage children's independent learning.

The operational plan is adequate and many policies contain sufficient information. Although, the recruitment and vetting procedures are not rigorous or contain sufficient detail to effectively inform the committee, staff and parents and the child protection policy is not complete. The induction of new staff is acceptable ensuring staff have generally good awareness of playgroup policies and procedures. Documentation and records are accurate, clear and maintained to a high standard. The staff store all confidential information securely and all regulatory information is in place and shared appropriately with parents. The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The last care inspection, recommended hand washing procedures were reviewed and the written risk assessment was extended to include identified hazards in all areas and actions to be taken to minimise those risks.

The setting has made good progress to promote children's health and safety. Hand washing routines and practices are very effective and successfully reduce the risk of infection. Written risk assessments are detailed and provide useful guidance and information about all areas of the premises, equipment and daily activities to ensure children are safe and secure.

The last nursery education inspection, recommended the setting: increased opportunities for children to gain personal independence at snack time; extended the use of mark making for different purposes, the opportunities for children to rhyme, link sounds and letters, show an interest in number problems, shapes and to undertake simple calculations; monitored the use of assessments to ensure they informed future planning and extended short term plans to show appropriate challenge and how individual children move onto the next stage of their learning.

The setting has made satisfactory progress to promote children's learning. Children are given every opportunity to be independent during snack-time routines. They enjoy many occasions to write for different purposes in their play and link sounds and letters frequently during daily routines. Topics on shape, the counting of children and adults present each day and grouping objects and comparing these, helps children to become more aware of numbers and to undertake simple calculation. Further development is necessary to ensure the planning links to children's next steps and assessments are up-to-date to provide children with sufficient challenge.

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

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection 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):

- create an accessible environment whereby children can select play items for themselves and make sure there are sufficient toys to provide enough choice and challenge across all areas of development. (also applies to nursery education)
- extend the operational plan to ensure all the policies and procedures which underpin the successful management of the setting are in place, rigorous and contain sufficient detail.

#### **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):

- devise and implement effective systems for monitoring the quality of the nursery education provision, especially in relation to the assessments and how these inform future planning about children's next steps in their learning.
- provide children with suitable opportunities to plan and organise their free play and learning. (also applies to care)



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