

Boughton Monchelsea Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127031
Inspection date	15 May 2007
Inspector	Vanessa Wood
Setting Address	The Village Hall, Church Street, Boughton Monchelsea, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 4HN
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Registered person	Boughton Monchelsea 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?

Boughton Monchelsea Playgroup opened in 1968 and is a registered charity, managed by a committee of parents. It operates from the main room in the village hall in Boughton Monchelsea, a village near Maidstone. It serves the local community and surrounding rural area. The hall has its own kitchen and cloakroom facilities and has the occasional use of a smaller room. Children have access to the hall playing field. The playgroup opens five days a week during school term-time. Sessions are from 09:15 until 11:45 and on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons from 12:30 until 15:00.

The playgroup is registered to care for 30 children at any one time. There are currently 74 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these 70 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup employs 11 members of staff who work with the children. Over half the staff hold an early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is suitably promoted because staff follow appropriate routines to prevent the spread of infection. Staff teach children the importance of washing hands after using the toilet and before snack time and provide them with liquid soap and paper towels. Suitable arrangements are in place to change nappies, respecting children's right to privacy. Staff maintain all the required records to support children's health very clearly. Children enjoy sharing nourishing snacks such as fruit or vegetables and have a choice of either milk or water to drink. Children are able to pour their own drinks and they help themselves to their snack. Topic work shows that children learn about the importance of having a healthy diet and experience different foods from around the world. Staff are aware of all children's dietary requirements. Children engage in some form of physical activity every day. They have access to outdoor play when the weather is good. Alternatively, staff organise physical activities in the main hall. Children enjoy physical education session when they change into suitable clothes and learn to climb, balance and slide on apparatus with confidence. They also delight in musical movement to a tape when they jump, skip and hop in time to the music. Staff talk to the children about how they feel after exercising and allow them time to rest and recover.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play freely in a safe and well maintained environment. A high adult to child ratio is maintained to ensure children's safety at all times. Room dividers have been introduced in the large hall to provide safe zones for children to play. Access is also available to a smaller room to give small groups of children time to concentrate on more detailed work. Children benefit from sufficient, good quality furniture and equipment and have opportunities to rest and relax in comfort. All equipment provided for the children is checked for safety on a regular basis. However, staff are unable to display children's work easily and are considering ways of improving the visual appearance of the hall to make it more welcoming to young children. Staff monitor the condition of the premises and equipment by carrying out effective daily risk assessments. Children learn how to take care of their own personal safety as staff remind children to pick up toys on the floor that others might trip over. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and follow the procedures set out in the comprehensive policy statement. They understand how to implement the procedures in order to safeguard children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting because they are cared for in a secure and exciting environment. They play with resources that are suitable for their age and stage of development. Children feel confident and at ease because staff enhance their play by offering effective support and encouragement. As a result they concentrate on self-chosen activities and practise a range of social skills. Staff effectively promote children's independence and most activities are initiated by children.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are experienced and have a good understanding of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Comprehensive plans are in place and staff record good observations of what children can do and understand. These assessments are used to plan the next steps in children's learning and to inform future planning. Children receive a great deal of individual attention and have access to a wide range of stimulating resources. Staff provide a stimulating play environment and children can choose from activities supporting all areas of learning. However, staff work within a restricted daily routine with set times for snack time and circle time which can mean that children's time to fully explore their self-chosen activities may be limited.

Children are confident and their independence is encouraged as they use their initiative to decide what resources they will use and how they will use them. Children's language is developing well and staff extend their learning well by using open ended questions to make children think and explore their ideas. Children learn to recognise their name as they self register and use their name card to register their interest in doing certain activities. They learn the sounds of letters and how words are formed and they bring in a picture from home linked to the letter sound of the week to stick on the letter board. Children learn to appreciate books and the book corner is used well as children look at books and share books with staff and each other. Children enjoy the mark making area where they choose paper and drawing materials, but a more varied selection of materials including reference books is not easily accessible to enable children to extend their learning and fully express their ideas.

Children are beginning to develop mathematical concepts and language. For example, an activity on shoe printing when children learn the difference between big and small as they print with high heeled shoes, trainers, child's shoes with patterns on the soles and boots of different sizes. Children learn different shapes as they play with dough. They enjoy opportunities to build and construct objects using good play equipment such as bricks and wheels that can be screwed together and made to work. Children have the opportunity to learn about technology through the computer and a circuit board. Children learn about the natural world as they collect things for the nature table and nurture a tomato plant to make it grow. Children enjoy expressing themselves as they paint and explore different colours and patterns. They have made a collage of their hand prints that they have printed and cut out themselves and stuck onto the paper.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and their families feel welcome in the setting because the staff create very good partnerships with parents. Children settle readily into the playgroup routines and they develop their independence and confidence. Children begin to understand diversity as they play with multicultural toys and puzzles and celebrate festivals from different cultures. They are given equal access to all resources regardless of gender. Staff work closely with parents and other agencies to provide good care and education for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children's behaviour is generally good. They show good respect for others and their needs and they play well in small and large groups, learning to share and take turns. For example, they register their interest in doing a special activity and understand that they must wait their turn in the queue. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with fairly, sensitively and according to the individual needs of each child. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive detailed information about the playgroup before children attend. They receive regular newsletters which include details of planned themes and topics to enable parents to extend children's learning at home. Parents are encouraged to

join the committee and to take part in the parents' rota system to help at the group. Parents receive regular information about their children's progress along the stepping stones and parents are available to talk to staff at any time. If parents are not able to bring children to the group, staff provide a contact book to ensure all information is shared with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by good organisation. Written policies are comprehensive, giving clear details of the procedures adopted by the group to support the care and education of children. Children receive good support from a staff team who organise their day to ensure the majority of their time is spent working face to face with them. They benefit from being cared for by staff who hold recognised childcare qualifications and who regularly attend update courses to enhance their care and delivery of the education programme. Robust procedures are in place for employing new staff and ensuring they are suitable to work with children. New staff are provided with an induction pack and are mentored through their probationary period.

Leadership and management is good. Staff form a united team and are deployed well to work directly with the children. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the group and use reflective practice to evaluate their work and the running of the group. The assessment system supports staff in identifying what children know and understand and what they need to do next. The information is used effectively to inform future planning to ensure children make progress in all areas of their development.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group was given two recommendations. To compile an action plan to ensure sufficient staff working with children have a child care qualification and to ensure the operational plan is comprehensive and includes procedures for when more than 26 children attend.

The group now employs five members of staff with a child care qualification to ensure qualified staff are always present to work with the children. A comprehensive operational plan is in place. This shows that staff appraisals are in place to identify training needs and staff are encouraged to attend further training to up date their knowledge of child care and the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. A second smaller room can be used when more than 26 children attend to ensure staff work within the recommendations of the National Guidance.

At the last education inspection two key issues were identified. To extend planning across all six areas of learning and to monitor the effectiveness of the assessment system.

Staff have worked hard to produce very good plans that ensure all six areas of learning are covered in the plans. They make very good assessments of children's progress along the stepping stones and record these well to identify the next steps in children's learning. This information is used to inform future plans.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 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):

- develop ideas to improve the visual environment of the hall to make it more inviting to young children

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):

- develop organisation of the daily routine to allow for a less structured time which gives children more time to play and explore their self chosen activity
- extend opportunities for children to experiment with writing for themselves by providing more resources that are easily accessible to children

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