

Parkwood 'Poppets' Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	103831
Inspection date	23 April 2007
Inspector	Karen Scott
Setting Address	Parkwood Green, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 9PN
Telephone number	01634 371886
E-mail	
Registered person	PWCA
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?

Parkwood Poppets Pre-School opened in 1977 and operates from one room in a community centre. It is situated in Parkwood, Gillingham. A maximum of 16 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday, term time only, from 09:00 to 12:00. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 24 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five members of staff. Of these, three hold early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The pre-school follows good hygiene practices. Children know they need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet, before preparing and eating food and after messy play. They willingly tidy up activities and enjoy such tasks as cleaning tables in preparation for eating at them. Infectious children do not attend helping to prevent the spread of infections. Children enjoy playing in the garden, exploring the area and making full use of the resources provided for them. On the occasions that they do not go outside, they use large play equipment indoors. The group makes occasional outings to the local park too. Therefore, children understand the need for regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Children chose from a range of healthy snacks such as fruit, vegetables, bread, cheese and ham, preparing their own sandwiches. They are encouraged to try new foods and are establishing a healthy eating pattern. Children are protected from food that they should not eat, as staff are aware of any allergies they may have. Throughout the session, children are able to help themselves to a drink of water whenever they need one, preventing dehydration. However, at snack time, children are not trusted to pour their own drinks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a small environment but good use is made of space, with different areas of learning arranged in the environment. Children make choices from the activities and resources that are arranged by the adults before they arrive. However, children are aware of all the other resources that are available to them and the adults meet their requests for other toys.

Necessary steps have been taken to minimise risks to children. For example, children change into soft-soled shoes when indoors to help prevent any sore fingers that are accidentally trodden on during play. A clearly defined procedure is in place for evacuation of the building and it is practised regularly with the children, helping to keep them safe should an emergency occur. Before playing outside an adult checks the area for any potential hazards in order to keep children from harm.

The staff have a reasonable understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a child they are caring for. Parents and carers are aware of this process. There is not a written statement in place informing parents and carers of the process should they make an allegation against a member of staff. This is a breach of regulations. However, staff have thought about what they would do if this event should occur. The setting has closed circuit television. Although most parents and carers are aware of this, there is not a procedure in place to ensure that they are formally made aware of this.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and confident. Staff are warm and affectionate, making children feel valued and comfortable. Children relate well to each other and to the adults who they approach for support, indicating that they have built good relationships. They arrive at the

setting happily and are keen to attend. Children make independent choices about what they wish to play with from the resources that staff have arranged for them. Children are encouraged to share their resources and to take turns, doing so willingly. They are encouraged to do things for themselves but given good support when it is required. Children play with a range of activities and benefit from occasional outings to the local park, shops and farms. All activities are planned and children's development assessed using the Foundation Stage framework regardless of children's age. The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and the group is using it to assess the developmental stages of children who are under three years.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff show an understanding of the Foundation Stage and the stepping-stones that children progress through. Children's requests for specific play opportunities are met and staff sit with them when they are playing, extending their learning. However, activities are planned for the whole group and not to build on individual children's needs. Staff observe children regularly, assessing children's stages of development. Children show initiative, asking questions and concentrating on activities. They enjoy their time at the group and show an understanding of right from wrong. When children start at the group, the supervisor prefers to make her own judgements on children's stages of development and therefore misses valuable input from parents and carers.

Children feel a sense of community. They enthusiastically sing the group's own song and enjoy each other's company. They care for each other, showing pride in their own and each other's achievements. Children are well behaved and play alongside each other and together. Children and staff spend a lot of time talking to each other. Staff extend children's language through discussion, questions and stories. Group story time is fun and children join in enthusiastically with their favourite stories. There are opportunities for children to recognise their names as they self-register, for example. Children are encouraged to write their names on pieces of work and many are forming recognisable letters. However all efforts are always praised. Mark making opportunities tend to be restricted to the drawing table and there are missed opportunities for children to practise this in other areas of play, for example the home corner.

There are a few number posters on the walls but limited opportunities for children to see number in the environment. However, children are encouraged to count as part of their play, for example counting how many trains are on the track. Children's shape recognition is good, recognising and naming different shapes in the environment. The group visits the local school once a week to use the computers. Although the setting has their own computer it is not used regularly so children that do not attend on Thursdays miss the chance to experience this form of technology. Children enjoy exploring the trees, plants and wildlife in the garden. Adults involve children in discussions about day and night and children give clear explanations about the differences in them.

Children play in a small but busy environment and they show a strong awareness of space, manoeuvring around each other and the room. Children enjoy large physical play. They use their bodies to create different movements and shapes. Children engage in activities requiring hand/eye co-ordination. They demonstrate good skills when using scissors, cutting the desired shape. Children enjoy art and craft, using their imaginations to create different works of art. Children regularly join in with group singing and enjoy dancing. However, there are limited opportunities to make music using instruments. Children use their imaginations when playing with small world toys and in the role-play area. Children move resources around the room to

extend their play. For example, a child takes a highchair to the play dough table and makes lunch for a baby.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with respect and made to feel good about themselves. Differences are acknowledged positively. Children talk about things that are important to them such as their families and holidays, and staff and children show an interest in each other. Children have access to a reasonable range of toys and resources reflecting positive images within society and enjoy occasional celebrations of festivals celebrated by various cultures. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The setting has experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They work with parents, carers and other agencies in order to meet children's individual needs and to offer the support that is required.

Children are confident and happy to be at the group. They benefit from lots of praise and encouragement and appropriate strategies help them to understand right from wrong. Children enjoy their play in a caring environment and they extend that kindness towards each other. They praise each other's work and share what they have made with each other.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Before children are placed in their care, the group gathers relevant information to enable children to be cared for appropriately. Parents and carers are made to feel part of the group, participating in outings and cookery sessions, for example. A notice board contains helpful information and parents and carers are encouraged to suggest anything that they feel will improve the setting. They are aware of how to make a complaint. Parents and carers receive written information regarding the Foundation Stage and how the setting will help children progress through the different areas of learning. Although parents are regularly informed of their children's progress they are not offered the chance to add their input to their child's record of learning, resulting in the group missing valuable information.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

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

Children enjoy and benefit from lots of adult support. Staff keep themselves informed of current childcare practices through attending training and using the knowledge they gain in the setting. All staff are first aid qualified and parents give written permission for them to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, helping to care for children in the event of an accident. Although the group does not give medication to children very often, there is not a policy in place for when the need arises and staff are unaware of the procedures that they should follow resulting in a possible risk to children and some confusion. Children have key workers meaning that parents have a point of contact. Adults understand that children relate better to some people rather than others and they work well as a team to support the children. Visitors' times of arrival and departure are recorded and children are never left alone with them, helping to keep them from harm.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff have regular meetings to monitor the care of children. The group has a clear vision of how they would like the setting to be and are very positive about future structural developments. They work hard, involving themselves in children's play. Staff discuss children's individual learning needs and how they intend to meet them but do not always make formal plans to do this.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, four recommendations were identified for progress within care and three for progress within nursery education.

For progress within care it was recommended that the group complete the operational plan and provide a written policy regarding lost children and other adults collecting them; that they extend the use of positive images; that they review the behaviour management policy and strategies used; and that staff undertake child protection training and that the policy is reviewed.

The group has written an operational plan that includes the policies and procedures of the playgroup. There are policies in place which explain what the setting would do if they were to lose a child and the procedures involved if other adults are collecting children. These policies are shared with parents and carers, making them aware of the group's procedures. However, the group have not written a policy about giving medication to children meaning that some staff and parents are unaware of the procedure involved. The group celebrates festivals from different cultures and have some resources reflecting positive images in society. A written behaviour policy is available to staff and parents. The group uses appropriate methods and strategies to manage behaviour and children are well behaved. Two members of staff have undertaken training in child protection and shared their knowledge with the other adults. The child protection policy has been reviewed and shared with parents and carers, making them aware of the procedures involved if child abuse is suspected.

For progress within nursery education it was recommended that the group plan and extend activities to ensure older and more able children are sufficiently challenged, recording expected outcomes for three and four year olds. It was also recommended that the group ensures more opportunities are given to support and encourage children's independence during snack time and through their creative activities, and to devise systems for staff appraisals.

Activity plans show the expected learning outcomes for children. Staff sit with children, extending their learning through play. Children show independence at snack time choosing what they would like to eat and drink. They prepare their sandwiches but are not trusted to pour their own drinks. Children show independence when involved in art and craft activities. They make choices about the resources that they wish to use. A staff appraisal system is in place, helping staff to monitor their provision.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 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 by Ofsted to keep a record of complaints 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):

- amend the child protection policy to include procedures to be followed if an allegation is made about a member of staff and to inform parents and carers that there is closed circuit television at the setting
- further develop knowledge and understanding of promoting young children's overall development; for example by the use of Birth to three matters
- devise a policy and procedure regarding the administration of medication

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):

- improve staff knowledge of how to use children's assessment records effectively to plan appropriate activities that take account of children's individual needs
- enable parents to contribute towards their children's learning

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