

Butterhill Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	122658
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Inspector	June Fielden
Setting Address	Butter Hill, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 2LE
Telephone number	07967 858 810
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Registered person	Butterhill Play Group
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Butterhill Playgroup is run by a committee. It opened in 1993 and operates from three rooms situated within the Quakers meeting house in Dorking, Surrey. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open Tuesday to Friday during school term times. It operates from 09.30 until 12.15 during the autumn term and from 09.30 to 13.00 during the spring and summer terms. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 21 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, seven receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs four members of staff. Of these two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is maintained through effective hygiene routines. They use liquid soap and paper towels when washing their hands, to avoid the risk of cross contamination. Staff make sure that children clean their nose with a tissue when necessary, to prevent the spread of infection. The playgroups medication record is well completed and signed by parents, to ensure children's welfare. Sick children are excluded, to safeguard the wellbeing of others, and written permission for the emergency medical treatment of children is obtained by staff.

Children all sit down together at snack time, making this a sociable occasion. Staff have a good understanding of healthy eating, and offer children a variety of different fruits for their snack. Children pour their own drinks, and water is always available to them, to ensure they are not thirsty. Parents provide a packed lunch when children stay for longer sessions in the spring and summer terms. Staff monitor what children eat to ensure they have a nutritional diet, and are aware of any allergies they have.

Children keep fit running around in the large garden at the setting. They use pushing and pulling movements when they ride on the small vehicles, and practise their aiming and catching skills while using the balls and bean bags. Children strengthen their muscles by bouncing, crawling and climbing on the climbing frame and slide. Inside the setting, they exercise by playing games with a parachute. If children are tired they can rest on a mat, or sit quietly in the book corner.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment. They move around freely between the two main rooms at the playgroup, selecting the toys they wish to use. The space available is suitably organised to provide different areas for children to play in. Music is often played in the background, to create a soothing atmosphere. Toys and equipment that are appropriate to the age and abilities of all children are made accessible to them, and regularly rotated, to maintain their interest.

Sound safety measures are in place to ensure children's wellbeing. Risk assessments are completed daily, and cover all areas of the setting. There is a secure system for the arrival and departure of children, and they are unable to leave the premises unsupervised. There is a fire blanket and smoke alarm in the kitchen, in case of emergencies. Children are appropriately protected from harm, as all staff are trained in child protection. The manager is responsible for child protection issues, and understands how to record and report concerns. Staff are aware of the signs of abuse to look for, and the appropriate procedure to follow.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The playgroup operates an effective settling in procedure for new children, which enables parents to stay with their child for as long as they feel is necessary. As a result, children confidently separate from parents on arrival and quickly engage in the activities prepared for them. Staff greet each child individually at registration time. They ask them all a question, to

enable them to speak in front of other children and feel part of the group. Younger children join in the same activities as the older ones and learn by watching them complete the tasks. Staff have different expectations for younger children and give them more support when necessary. They speak to them about things that are of interest to them, such as their birthday parties, in order to raise their self-esteem.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children learn through free play, whole group activities and focused tasks, where they work in a small group with an adult. Staff use registration time to reinforce previous learning and to introduce children to the day's activities. They clearly explain tasks to children at their level of understanding, and discuss with them what they are doing, to extend their play. Staff remain close at hand to offer assistance and interest children in the activities. They laugh and joke with them, creating a friendly atmosphere for children to play and learn in. There is an effective planning system in place to ensure that all aspects of each area of learning are covered. The playgroup produces long, medium and short term weekly plans. Staff try to follow children's interests and are fairly flexible with regard to when activities are introduced to them. Each day there is a focus activity, for which a more detailed plan is produced. They are evaluated to assist staff with future planning, and show how the task can be extended or adapted according to children's needs.

Key workers are responsible for observing children and noting when they have made progress in a particular area of the curriculum, or are not developing as well as expected. Extended observations are also made, to inform staff when setting targets for each child. These are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are achieved, and referred to at planning meetings, which all staff attend. Children's profiles show that they are making good progress in the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Staff have devised their own method of completing children's achievement records, to provide parents with greater detail on their child's progress. However, the samples of children's work which staff keep as evidence of their achievements are not annotated, which means that it is not easy to tell which area of progress they relate to.

Children are encouraged to develop their independence at the playgroup, handing out the bowls to each other at snack time and being involved in tidying up at the end of the session. At circle time staff make children feel important by singing each child's name when it is their turn to share with the group. Children are able to sit quietly at these times, and listen to what others have to say. They show self-control, and follow instructions given by staff. For example, when playing in the garden children were asked not to go on the lawn because it had been reseeded, and as a result they stayed on the paved areas. Children use the paths in the outside area to practise mark making with coloured chalks. There are pens and paper set out for them to use on the tables inside the setting, and children are encouraged to write their name on their work. Staff share books with children, making them aware of how to hold them correctly, and develop their interest in stories.

Children become familiar with numbers and counting through everyday activities. They count how many children are present each morning and the number of books they take from the bookshelf. Children identify the correct numbers for the date when completing the weather chart at the start of the day. The topics they follow involve children in looking for different shapes around the playgroup. This work is reinforced when they make collage pictures, or see how many triangle shapes they can cut from the sandwich they have made. Children use malleable materials such as play dough, and small tools to form a variety of different shapes,

developing their small muscle skills. They develop these further through threading activities and playing with small figures in the dolls house.

Children use their imagination in the well resourced role play area, where they dress up and play alongside each other. They participate in music sessions, singing familiar songs with staff, adding arm and hand movements. They develop a sense of rhyme and rhythm as they shake, bang and tap the musical instruments. Children march up and down the room playing their instruments, and respond to the music as it speeds up. Children use the stimulating resources provided to explore and investigate their environment. For example, one child walked around the setting looking at different objects through a large magnifying glass. They are made aware of the local area by talking about their journey to the pre-school, and look at maps to find different places around the world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are all treated equally by staff. They collect sufficient information when children start at the playgroup to make them aware of their likes, dislikes and individual needs, such as whether they require a comforter. Staff provide appropriate resources to raise children's awareness of diversity, and introduce them to festivals and celebrations from other cultures. They have experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Planning is adapted to meet their needs, and when necessary funding is sought to provide them with individual assistance.

Children assist staff in devising a list of rules for the playgroup, and they are regularly reminded of these. Staff speak to children who behave inappropriately and distract them by suggesting alternative activities which they can participate in. When necessary, staff monitor children's behaviour and discuss this with parents, so that they can work with them to resolve the problem. Staff teach children to have good manners. They explain the rules when playing games and encourage children to take turns. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is good. They receive a news letter each half term, which informs them of the different topics children will be covering. A notice board is placed outside the setting to keep them well informed about what children will be doing each day. Parents feel that they receive good feedback from staff about their child's progress in nursery education, and are positive about the care staff provide for them. The playgroup operate a parents rota to encourage their involvement in the setting, and to allow them to see how children are taught. The key workers share children's records with parents when they attend their rota day, and discuss their child's progress with them. Parents who are unable to attend can make an appointment to speak to a member of staff at any time. They assist their child in answering the question on the table by the door at the start of each session. This gives parents an insight into what children are learning, as the questions are based on the topics they are studying. Parents are able to participate in running the setting by joining the playgroup committee. The setting holds open mornings for new parents and they are given a copy of the groups prospectus. The playgroup has the appropriate policies in place, including a complaint's procedure, to inform parents how concerns will be handled by staff. Parents are aware that a copy of the policies is available for them to see. However, they are not stored in a manner which makes them easily accessible to parents if they should wish to refer to the arrangements in place for the care of their child.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff never allow visitors to remain on their own with children, to ensure their wellbeing. Children are cared for by suitably qualified staff, as there is a sound recruitment and induction process in place. The manager works with the committee to interview and appoint staff. Children's records are stored securely to maintain confidentiality, and are available to a child's parents on request. Staff ratios are appropriately maintained, and the playgroups certificate of registration is displayed, to make parents aware of the conditions under which they operate. However, the registration system used by the setting does not record the daily hours of children's attendance. This is a breach of regulations, and impacts on children's safety in the event of an emergency.

The leadership and management of the playgroup is good. Staff are provided with effective opportunities to develop their knowledge and obtain relevant qualifications, in order to improve outcomes for children. The manager conducts annual staff appraisals, when training and professional development are discussed. The playgroup committee are supportive of the group and understand their responsibilities. They carry out the administrative functions for the group, to allow the manager to concentrate on the day to day organisation of the setting. Staff are kept well informed through staff meetings which are held each half term. Planning and target setting for the children is discussed, at these meetings, involving all staff in this process. Information is cascaded to staff informally before the start of each session. The manager delegates responsibility to the deputy manager in his absence. Staff work together efficiently as a team, understand their duties, and carry them out with minimal supervision. They are responsible for talking to parents and maintaining children's records in their role as key workers. However, the system used for keeping samples of children's work as evidence of their achievements currently lacks detail. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the setting ensure that regular fire drills are carried out and recorded, and that a written record signed by parents, of all accidents is kept. It was further recommended that the setting ensures policies and procedures are fully understood by staff.

The play group now holds regular fire drills, to cover all staff and children. These are recorded, to maintain children's safety. A written record of all accidents is kept, and signed by parents, to ensure children's wellbeing. Since the last inspection staff have studied the policies and procedures, and the manager regularly refers to them at staff meetings. They are discussed with staff at their appraisals, to make sure all are aware of their content, and that they are putting them into practice.

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 that a copy of the policies and procedures are easily accessible to parents
- ensure that the register shows children's hours of attendance.

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):

- ensure that samples of work kept as evidence of children's achievements are appropriately annotated.

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