

Sandford Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	115294
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Inspector	Rachael Williams
Setting Address	Methodist School Rooms, Hill Road, Sandford, Winscombe, Avon, BS25 5RJ
Telephone number	0780 8544131
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Registered person	Sandford 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 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?

Sandford Playgroup is situated in the village of Sandford in North Somerset. It has been operating since 1978 and children attend from a wide geographical area.

The group runs from the Methodist School Rooms which consist of the main hall, entrance hall, toilets, kitchen and outside play space at the rear of the premises. The group share the premises with the village toddler group and other local community groups.

The group is managed by a volunteer parent committee.

The Playgroup is open Monday to Friday 09:00 until 12:55 term time only. The session includes opportunities for children to remain for a pre-packed lunch. The Playgroup is registered for a maximum of 20 children aged between two years and up to five years; children are offered places from the term in which they are three years old. There are currently 18 children on roll; of whom 11 are in receipt of early years funding. The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

There are seven members of staff, all of whom work part time. Four members of staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. Two staff members are commencing a level 3 course. Staff attend regular local training sessions to update their knowledge.

The group receives support from the local authority and are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. The playgroup has close links with the local village school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are becoming more aware of their personal needs as they begin to access the toilet facilities independently and wash their hands appropriately after completing creative activities. However, children do not consistently flush the toilet or wash their hands after using the toilet and need support to do so. Some children use the communal wash bowl after using the toilet and dry their hands on the towel which is placed on the floor which compromises children's health.

Children's health is maintained in an emergency as half the staff have appropriate paediatric first aid training. The first aid box is fully stocked and its contents are monitored regularly. Accidents are recorded informatively and shared with parents promptly. Appropriate medication records are available and staff have appropriate knowledge of recording administered medication and obtaining appropriate consents. Children are protected well in the hot weather as there is clear information to parents on providing sun cream and sun hats.

Children are provided with a range of healthy and nutritious snacks which introduces them to a healthy lifestyle. For example, children use knives confidently to spread toppings on their crackers and toast. Although a water cooler is available it is not filled with water consequently children cannot access this during the session. A selection of drinks, such as milkshake, orange juice and water are provided at snack time which children are beginning to pour independently. Parents are given clear information on the storage of lunch boxes, thus perishable goods are stored appropriately in the fridge or ice packs are used to maintain lunches at an appropriate temperature.

Children enjoy weekly visits to the village hall in the winter and walks in the summer to develop their physical well-being. A small courtyard is available to provide children with daily fresh air experiences. However, this is not regularly used to encourage children's physical development and understanding of healthy living. Some physical activities are provided within the hall, such as music and movement. However, this does not sufficiently stimulate and challenge older and more able children to develop new skills.

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. For example, attractive and colourful displays promote children's self-esteem. There is a good range of safe and developmentally appropriate toys and resources which are easily accessible to children in low-level units.

Children benefit from a secure environment which is monitored appropriately. Most potential hazards have been identified through the use of a sound risk assessment. However, some potential risks have been overlooked, such as access to the kitchen. Children are not offered clear explanations as to why it is not safe to climb over furniture or to stand on chairs. There are good systems in place to ensure children are protected on outings and local walks, such as appropriate consents, high ratios and close supervision of the children to ensure their safety. Children are protected at collection as a good system is in place to ensure that staff are well informed of suitable adults who may collect the children in their care.

Staff have sufficient knowledge of child protection issues to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded. Appropriate literature is available, however, the policy has not been updated to reflect the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle quickly into the small and friendly group. Good links are established between staff and children which ensures their individual needs are met and interests are sufficiently promoted. Children access their own play and learning experiences with confidence and developing independence from the appropriately organised room. Children are provided with a range and balance of activities which help them make progress in most areas of their development. However, younger children are not fully supported as staff have not completed training on the Birth to three matters guidance. Consequently, planned activities and assessments are in line with the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Adults are interested in what children do and say; they talk and listen to them and ask questions to make them think. For example, a younger child manipulates jigsaw pieces well showing good coordination. His development is encouraged by appropriate support from a member of staff who encourages him to name the colours and supports his developing vocabulary by introducing shape names.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals as there is an appropriate balance of experiences. Topics are well-organised to reflect the community and children's interests, for instance, the present topic is 'Countries' which develops children's understanding of the wider community through the use of artefacts, reference material and visitors, such as a parent to introduce Spanish to the children.

The environment is organised appropriately to encourage children's learning. For instance, a creative table has been established for children to access a range of materials independently so that they can create freely and imaginatively. They are able to use tools, such as scissors, competently. Staff are developing their knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum through relevant training and support from an advisory teacher. As yet, planned activities do not have a clear learning intention to support children's progression. Activities are not actively evaluated in order to plan future experiences for the children which are relevant to their stage of development. Staff make regular observations of the children's achievements. However, these are not consistently used to assess children's progress and to plan next steps in learning.

Children initiate activities well and are confident to access additional resources to support their learning. Staff deploy themselves well to support children through appropriate questioning and encouragement. Children are confident communicators. For example, a member of staff listens to a child explain how to complete the maze on the computer. He shows her how to complete it and encourages her to have a go.

Children listen attentively to the register and are able to adapt their behaviour to 'stop, look and listen' when they are involved in an appropriate activity. However, unacceptable behaviour is observed when children are not fully engaged in activities, such as a music and movement activity. Some children find it difficult to share, for instance, when waiting his turn for a musical instrument.

Children confidently count how many children are present at the playgroup pointing to each one individually. They are encouraged to problem solve, for instance, 'are there more girls or boys?' Children participate enthusiastically in action rhymes and enjoy speeding up and slowing down as they listen and observe the actions of staff. Children enjoy playing with the garage and negotiate ways of creating a queue up the ramp. Staff question the children, for instance, 'what is blocking the ramp?' encouraging them to make observations; 'how many cars do you think there are?' Children respond estimating how many they think, for example, '14' or 'too many to count'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are confident and settled within the playgroup. Good relationships have been established with friendly staff who are aware of their needs and interests. Children are valued and respected as individuals. Staff acknowledge children's achievements displaying them attractively and children show pride in their work as they wish to share it with others. There is a wealth of resources and positive images to promote children's understanding of the diversity in our society. Resources are easily accessible, consequently, children use them spontaneously in their day's play. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well within the fully inclusive environment. Their welfare and development is promoted well through the provision of accurate individual educational plans and good liaison with parents and outside agencies. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

On the whole, children's behaviour is satisfactory. Most children share and play cooperatively as they are aware of expectations and boundaries. Although staff use a range of strategies these are not always appropriate for all children according to their age and stage development. Staff acknowledge this and have been proactive in identifying a relevant behaviour management course.

Parents receive a wealth of information that is relevant to the setting. Good relationships with their parents ensure continuity in care and contribute significantly to children's well-being as children are looked after according to parents' wishes. Parents are well informed of the complaints procedure and a complaint log has been established to share with parents should such an incident occur. Partnership with parents is good. Parents are well informed of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of their children's progression and achievements. Parents contribute to their child's learning and achievements from home are acknowledged through the use of the 'WOW' system.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care, welfare and learning is generally well promoted through procedures, policies and good relationships with parents. All regulatory documents are in place to ensure consistency in care for the children. The well documented operational plan ensures a stable environment is created to support children's development. High ratios are maintained within the small, friendly group. Children's attendance is accurately recorded and children are closely supervised in the appropriately organised setting. The provision is generally well-organised, however, there are limited opportunities for children to be active outdoors.

Children are closely supervised by competent staff. However, suitability arrangements have not been fully established to ensure the name and address of all staff working at the setting are readily available and confirmation that they have been fully screened.

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

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff and committee members are working well together and have a common sense of purpose to ensure that weaknesses are identified and improvements are made. A detailed action plan from the last inspection has focused staff's attention to take prompt action to address these issues. Training needs have been identified through the use of annual appraisals and staff are extending their knowledge of how children develop and their understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The provision for nursery education is beginning to be monitored appropriately to ensure that children receive consistency in their care and learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the quality and standards of nursery education were judged inadequate. Actions were raised relating to the monitoring of the provision, planning and assessment. Progression has been made in addressing these issues.

Recommendations were also raised in relation to health and organisation. Appropriate action has been taken to address these issues.

The staff and committee are working well together to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education. Staff are confident to identify improvements, such as behaviour management training, and take appropriate action. However, some areas, such as planning and assessment, need further development.

Through training and support from an advisory teacher staff are improving their knowledge and understanding of how children learn. Although planning provides children with a range of experiences to help them develop in all areas of their learning, ineffective evaluation of activities and clear direction has meant that older and more able children are not sufficiently challenged. Consequently, evaluations have not been used effectively to influence future planning to meet children's developing needs.

An appropriate system has been established to observe children's achievements, however, these are not used effectively to assess children's progression towards the early learning goals. Thus, next steps in learning are not sufficiently identified.

Accidents and incidents are fully documented and shared promptly with parents. The staff have appropriate knowledge of recording administered medication, gaining appropriate consents and ensuring a parent countersigns the record.

Children's independence and self-care are being developed. Children access the toilets independently, make decisions about their play and are supported to pour their own drinks at snack time.

The well-documented operational plan ensures a stable environment is created for children. Staff have appropriate knowledge of the policies and procedures to ensure consistency in their care.

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):

- develop consistency in hygienic hand washing arrangements
- develop children's understanding of safety, in particular with regards to accessing the kitchen and suitable use of furniture
- provide children with regular opportunities to be outside in order to promote and challenge their physical development
- ensure accessible individual records are kept on the premises of staff members

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):

- provide appropriate stimulation and challenge for older and more able children
- ensure learning intentions are clearly identified, evaluated and assessed to identify next steps in learning and to influence future planning

- continue to develop an effective system to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education.

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