

Sunnyside Community Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	129394
Inspection date	26 June 2007
Inspector	Gillian Charlesworth
Setting Address	Church Hall, Ivy House Lane, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 2PP
Telephone number	07808 639419
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Registered person	Sunnyside Community 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?

Sunnyside Community Playgroup was registered in 2000 and has been operating for more than 18 years. It operates from one room and the foyer of a church hall in Berkhamsted. There is a small paved outdoor entrance area that children use for outdoor play. The group serves the local community.

A maximum of 32 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 35 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language. The group opens Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday during school term time. Sessions are from 09:15 until 11:45. An optional lunch club operates on Tuesdays and Wednesdays until 12:30.

The setting employs seven part-time staff to work with the children. Five staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. Two staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children always have healthy snacks each day. These include a variety of dried and fresh fruit. As children sit in small social groups with practitioners, older children develop their skills, chopping soft fruit such as pears while younger children are well supported. A bespoke system for recording individual dietary needs works well to ensure that children's dietary needs are effectively met. Children have a jug of water freely available during the session. At snack time they have a choice of milk or water that is generally served by practitioners with some children helping. However, they are not yet encouraged to pour independently.

Children have regular opportunities to play in the fresh air and enjoy physical activity in the limited space available. In fine weather they enjoy outdoor activities such as pasta play and painting and can move freely between indoors and outdoors. They develop physical skills by using balls and playing parachute games. Practitioners support children's developing physical skills, for example, by holding their hands while they balance along a beam. There are opportunities for children to visit the local allotment and learn about healthy foods or to walk around the church each day in the fresh air.

Children are developing their self care skills through the daily routine. For example, they competently use a variety of fasteners while dressing-up. They can access tissues independently. There are consistent procedures to help children learn the importance of hand washing because practitioners ensure that all children wash their hands before snacks and talk about why they do this. However, children's health is not fully protected from the risks of cross-infection because children use communal bowls of water and the organisation limits their independence. Otherwise, children's health is protected from the risks of cross infection through a sickness policy that is readily available for parents. There are effective arrangements to ensure that children have appropriate first aid treatment and all practitioners are fully trained. Arrangements to administer medication are in place and clearly understood, including documentation to protect children's health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and secure environment where staff can be identified by their uniform, badges and photographs on the notice board. Activities are set out at child-height but the hall is used by the community therefore displays of children's work are often removed. Security is given a high priority therefore children cannot leave the premises unsupervised. For example, exits are well supervised, locked or monitored throughout the session; children are fully supervised when other community users walk through communal areas; and information is recorded to ensure that children are collected only by authorised people. Children can freely access a suitable range of pre-determined materials and resources and most are well used to promote their learning and development.

Children can play safely and are mostly kept safe from harm because adults are aware of their responsibilities and assess risks on a daily basis, taking practical steps to minimise these. For example, fitting temporary physical barriers to the outside area, and identifying repairs needed to carpets that may cause a slip and trip hazard. There is a high ratio of adults to children present. The adults work directly with the children for the majority of the session and therefore

children are well supervised. For example, practitioners respond immediately when children begin to play boisterously and this minimises any risks of accidental injury. Children generally learn how to keep themselves safe through discussions during everyday activities. For example, they know that small objects can cause a choking hazard. Fire evacuation procedures are sufficiently prioritised and include evaluations to protect children in the event of an emergency.

All practitioners have recently attended training in child protection and therefore have an understanding of safeguarding children. They are aware of revisions such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board and have appropriate contact information for reporting concerns. However, this information is not reflected in the written policy in line with criteria outlined in the National Standards. Practitioners know the children and families well and have a genuine concern for their well-being. They recognise potential risk factors, record any concerns as they arise and monitor children's well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are at ease and happy in the calm setting and relish their time there. They arrive with parents and carers who are briefly involved in singing at registration before children settle quickly and engage in a range of pre-determined activities. They are developing high levels of confidence and self-esteem and approach practitioners to share their delights and achievements, for example proudly showing flowers they have made from sand.

Children enjoy the broad range of resource led activities and are particularly inspired by activities that they can explore and investigate using their senses. For example, painting and wet-and-dry pasta play outside. Children have regular opportunities to walk in the local vicinity at a set pace, determined by the group. As they walk around the church, they stop as practitioners encourage them to listen for the sound of trains and anticipate them passing. When they see the trains they joyfully wave and talk about their observations. Practitioners spend time playing and talking with the children and as a result, children are well supported. For example, children enjoy making and serving food in the home corner. Practitioners are on hand to help them follow their interests as they select dressing-up resources, dolls and buggies to develop their imaginative ideas.

Children's impulse to communicate is effectively fostered. Children approach practitioners confidently, ask for resources and are helped to find solutions to problems when alternatives are suggested. They talk with practitioners who listen and respond with interest to their observations and experiences therefore conversations are meaningful. Young children enjoy small group time when they can choose books that practitioners read. They are skilfully supported as they comment on the illustrations or talk about their experiences. The setting has regard to the framework 'Birth to three matters', and refers to this in their written evaluations of activities.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are generally making progress in all areas of learning although lack experience in some aspects including Knowledge and Understanding of the World. Practitioners are developing their knowledge of the Foundation Stage but are not yet clear how children are progressing through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. This is because, even though practitioners make continual observations of children's achievements, assessment is not sufficiently developed to measure children's

progress through the stepping stones or cover all aspects of children's learning. Long and medium term plans are basic and focus on themes or resources rather than what children are intended to learn. Daily plans focus on resources to cover all six areas of learning. However, what children are intended to learn does not always link to the appropriate stepping stones. A planned daily craft activity is focussed towards children's learning needs. For example, children eagerly use wet and dry pasta play to extend their mathematical development while encompassing other areas naturally. Practitioners encourage them to develop their understanding of measure as they talk about long and short. Children explore the media and experiment using scissors to cut soft pasta while practitioners help them to make connections and understand that one piece becomes two. They build their vocabulary from this experience, and practitioners name materials such as spaghetti when children describe it as 'long pasta'.

The use of time and resources help children to be independent for some of the time. Children can select from the resources set out during the free play session that provide ongoing opportunities for children to practise and refine their skills. They participate well in adult led small group activities such as stories and listen with interest, having chances to make observations and share their experiences. During large group activities, most children enjoy suggesting and singing familiar songs and practitioners help them to focus when they become restless. At snack time children use tools such as knives to cut their fruit into pieces. Methods to help children learn are generally effective. Children build easy and trusting relationships with practitioners therefore they are confident and have high levels of self-esteem. They have positive attitudes to learn and play with the resources available that enables them to practise and refine their skills naturally using some that reflect diversity. They are encouraged to try new experiences and are particularly motivated by the adult-led focussed activities that encourage exploration and investigation such as sand pictures and pasta play. The setting has regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and implements appropriate approaches for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some strategies are being developed to support those with English as an additional language.

Practitioners manage children well. They use positive methods such as praise and effectively encourage children to share and take turns. This supports children's generally good progress in their Personal, Social and Emotional Development. They have positive dispositions and attitudes to learn, as they move between different activities confidently and are involved in what they are doing. They are developing positive relationships, play socially together during role play and communicate well as they approach practitioners confidentially to ask for help or proudly share their achievements. Children talk about meaningful experiences as practitioners listen and respond with interest which promotes their communication and language. They have chances to recognise their names at snack time and sometimes select books to read independently or with practitioners. They have plenty of opportunity to practise their pre-writing skills when they use mark making equipment. Children use a calendar at the beginning of the session to discuss time and are prepared for changes to the routine for example, when music is played to tidy away. They visit the local allotments and take walks around the churchyard, developing a sense of place and providing opportunities to observe the natural environment. However, the organisation limits chances for children to investigate and explore at their own pace, and they have few chances to develop knowledge of information communication technology (ICT) or others cultures and beliefs. Children can sometimes move freely between indoor and outdoors and develop skills using balancing apparatus, balls and quoits. They show pleasure and confidence as they jump in puddles but are not always using or learning about sensible clothing outdoors. Parachute games help them develop coordination and control. Painting activities are sometimes available to help children mix and explore the properties of colour. They are interested in the home corner and enjoy dressing-up and making meals

imaginatively. They develop rhythm as they imitate practitioners tapping their knee during singing sessions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have a strong sense of belonging and are treated with equal concern. They bring cherished belongings from home and talk about them at the beginning or end of the session. They approach practitioners confidently and their requests are listened to and acted upon. For example, children ask for specific imaginative play materials and these are provided. Children's choices are respected. During free play, they can move between resources according to their interests. In group activities practitioners involve children by encouraging them to suggest songs or choose stories. Children have opportunities to take part in action rhymes. Those who are less confident are not pressured to join in and enjoy watching others. Children learn about the local community, and diversity. 'People Who Help Us' such as builders, midwives and road safety patrols sometimes visit the setting. A welcome poster is displayed in a range of languages and children naturally play with resources that reflect disability and ethnicity. The setting is aware that some children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The leader has attended training courses in relation to special needs. She works together with practitioners to identify individual needs, involving parents and other agencies appropriately. The setting takes steps to seek funding so that staffing arrangements meet the needs of individual children. Parent feedback indicates appreciation of the setting's commitment and support.

Children behave well. They know the rules because some are displayed and discussed individually and at group time. Practitioners intervene well when children occasionally become boisterous and this minimises incidents of frustration. Children have high levels of self-esteem and feel valued because practitioners respond to their conversations respectfully, offer constant praise and value their achievements. For example when one child helps another balance along a beam by holding their hand, they are praised by a practitioner. There is a strong emphasis on helping children to play harmoniously and to share. Children are confident to approach practitioners where they cannot resolve conflict for themselves and practitioners' skilful intervention enables children to continue in their play.

Children benefit from the successful relationships between parents and practitioners, the variety of information that is available and the policies and procedures that provide for continuity of children's care. Parent feedback is complimentary and includes good settling-in procedures where children are effectively supported by practitioners.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Parents are provided with a range of general information about the setting that is always available in the foyer. This includes a policy folder, training records, photographs and a notice board. A parent brochure has also been devised which includes a basic outline of the Foundation Stage, areas of learning and how the children are assessed. A topic web of activities is displayed. Practitioners are always available to discuss children's progress informally. However, there are no strategies in place to encourage parents to be involved in the continuous assessment of their children's learning because development records are only shared when the children leave the setting. A committee of parents have the opportunity to be involved in the management of the group, for example, by reviewing and developing policies and procedures. All parents willingly participate in the parent rota and this provides informal opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. Parents are invited to share what they know about their child by completing a general profile at the outset. This establishes starting points for their child's learning and serves as a tool to

help practitioners informally get to know the children and develop strategies to support them. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's welfare and development is generally protected and safeguarded. There are systems in place to ensure that all adults working with children are suitable. These include procedures for vetting and recruitment and arrangements to ensure practitioners ongoing suitability. For example, through regular completion of health declarations. Documentation is well-organised and readily available. It is regularly reviewed and generally supports the safe management of the children. However, systems to effectively monitor the policies, procedures and routines are not yet sufficiently developed.

Children are familiar with the consistent, dedicated practitioners who work effectively together to interact and supervise them well. The majority of practitioners are qualified to Level 2 or above and are therefore knowledgeable in childcare. Children have fun and enjoy using the resources set out daily. Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and management of funded children is satisfactory. The leader is committed to her role and supports an enthusiastic staff team. She has devised procedures to delegate responsibility to staff, help them take an active role and share a common purpose. She promotes effective communication and relationships with staff, parents and children through team meetings, informal discussions and a parent rota. A qualified teacher suggests strategies to improve the nursery education. This gives the setting a vision to develop, for example to introduce assessment records that link more closely to the stepping stones. Progress has been made in addressing some of the previously identified actions to benefit the children's learning overall. The leader has been instrumental in supporting the professional development of all practitioners. There is an appraisal system that supports staff in their development but procedures to identify the settings training needs are not fully effective.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that risk assessment and procedures be developed for the premises and safe collection of children; and that good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing.

The setting has devised procedures to keep children safe from harm. Appropriate risk assessment forms showing the area, nature, probability and risk level of specific areas are in place. Assessments include steps that the setting takes each day to keep children safe. For example, fitting electric power points with socket covers and having a spare supply readily available. Parent collection books are provided and used effectively to alert practitioners of any changes to collection arrangements. Hand-washing procedures are not yet effective to protect children's health. Practitioners supervise children's hand washing consistently. However, children can only use cold water because the temperature of hot water is determined by the premises management and is too hot for children's safe use. Hand washing procedures include the use of soap and communal bowls of cold water. This limits the effectiveness of protecting children from the risks of cross-infection. This remains a recommendation for improvement.

The previous nursery education inspection recommended that the setting improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and early learning goals, including

linking the planning and assessment systems. It also recommended that the setting make effective use of resources to inspire children and encourage them to initiate their own learning.

The setting has put an action plan in place that includes the provision for two practitioners to complete core National Vocational Qualifications and Introductory courses. Training records show that core qualifications have been achieved but only two senior practitioners have attended specific training in relation to one area of learning since the last inspection. The provision of resources each day is variable. Resources are set out well but very few link to the planned topic. The setting have not yet overcome barriers to provide resources that enable children to explore, use their senses and develop creativity on a daily basis. However, when these are made available, children are inspired to initiate their own learning.

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.

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):

- improve hand washing facilities and encourage all aspects of children's healthy independence
- review the written child protection statement in line with the National Standards, Local Safeguarding Children Board and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - summary'; ensure that concerns are reported promptly and agencies can work together
- develop a system to monitor the effectiveness of the provision and self-assess areas for improvement (this also applies to nursery education).

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):

- increase staff skills and knowledge of the Foundation Stage to help them make the most of all potential learning opportunities and challenge children throughout the provision

- develop and utilise the planning system to link more closely to the stepping stones and the early learning goals and improve challenges set for the 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