

North Lopham Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254195
Inspection date	02 May 2007
Inspector	Lesley Gadd
Setting Address	The Mess, C/o St. Andrews C of E VA Primary School, The Street, North Lopham, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 2LR
Telephone number	01379 687512
E-mail	
Registered person	North Lopham 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?

North Lopham playgroup is run by a committee of parents and carers. It opened in 2002 and operates from an adapted school building with an enclosed outdoor area, at North Lopham, in Norfolk. A maximum of 18 children attend the setting at any one time. The playgroup is open 09:00 to 13:00 from Monday through to Friday during school term times. Children attend the setting for a variety of sessions throughout the week.

There are currently 18 children aged from two to four years on roll. Of these 15 children receive funding for early education. The playgroup welcomes, but does not currently support, children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or English as an additional language.

The setting employs three members of staff and most of these hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the local authority teacher advisory service.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is suitably promoted. They are cared for in a warm, clean and appropriately maintained environment. Suitable standards of cleanliness and sound hygiene practices minimise the risk of infection and the staff use anti-bacterial spray when wiping tables before snacks are served. Children are beginning to learn the importance of personal hygiene as staff remind them to wash their hands after they use the toilet and before eating. When children become ill through sickness the setting ensure parents know that children need to stay at home to avoid them passing on germs to other children. If children have a minor accident, whilst staff can be called from the school to administer first aid, there is no one on site who is currently first aid trained. This could lead to a delay in children receiving treatment in the case of an injury if needed. Written parental permission to call medical aid is in place to ensure children receive any life saving treatment in an emergency.

Children enjoy a nutritious range of refreshments to promote their growth. They choose from a variety of fresh fruits, such as strawberries and bananas, for their mid-morning snack and help themselves to drinks of water to refresh themselves when needed. Children are beginning to learn about food and the benefits of healthy eating. They discuss what food they like and why it is not acceptable to eat chocolate all the time. Children are planting beans and learning about how food grows. Children's individual dietary requirements are discussed with parents before care is provided and details are kept to remind staff of their allergies. As a result, children's dietary needs are met.

All children enjoy a range of active play which helps them to maintain their physical health. Children are eager to run, ride bikes and throw hoops outside honing their physical skills. The setting has access to an outside play area however, this is not used entirely effectively to ensure children have sufficient space to develop their large muscle tone and be active throughout the session. As a result at times children engage in disruptive, inappropriate play as they do not productively burn off excess energy.

Children take the opportunity to rest and recuperate when needed, supporting their sense of well-being. They relax on the sofas and enjoy a quiet story with staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety is given generally appropriate consideration. The main entrances to the building are secure to prevent unwelcome intruders and daily risk assessments of the premises are conducted to reduce potential hazards and protect the children from harm. The equipment used by the children is checked before they arrive to ensure it is safe and an accurate register of children's attendance is held at all times. The setting holds relevant insurance and staff give positive support to the children to help keep the toys tidy so that they reduce the risk of accidents within the play areas. Older children are aware of what they must do in the event of a fire however fire evacuation records and practises are out of date. As a result new children may be unsure about what to do should they need to leave the building in an emergency. Children are developing their own safety awareness for future independence as they discuss how to cross the road safely on outings.

Children are emotionally secure because they receive a warm welcome from the staff and come into the setting happily. The main play room is child-centred and the colourful toys, displays of children's art work and child-sized furniture all help children to feel at home in the playgroup and stay relaxed.

Children's welfare and protection is given some consideration. Children are not released to adults unless parents have given written permission which keeps them safe. The staff demonstrate that they are able to recognise some signs and symptoms of child abuse and recognise their responsibilities towards the children. However, not everyone connected with the setting is clear about whom they need to contact if they have concerns. As a result there could be an unnecessary delay in children receiving immediate protection if needed. Procedures held are up to date and parents are aware of the settings policy to support and protect the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are happy and secure in this supportive setting. They enjoy warm relationships with staff who are always free to offer a reassuring cuddle and children are consequently self assured from an early age. Staff are kind and friendly in their approach towards the children and sit with them supporting their play. Staff and children enjoy painting activities and laugh raucously at a shared joke about the funny shape of different fruits. Staff talk to the children about what they are doing and children communicate well. They tell staff about their favourite foods and stories about sibling antics.

The children enjoy a broad range of developmentally appropriate activities however, staff do not have a strong knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. As a consequence younger children's developmental needs are not robustly supported. Children are starting to make connections in their play. They work out how to fix magnetic construction toys together and enjoy squeezing the paint through their fingers exploring the feel and texture of paint. Children competently make marks on paper with crayons and pencils and gain a great deal of pleasure from viewing their creations on the display walls. Children use tools competently. They cut their pictures out using scissors and use brushes with confidence. Children play well together and enjoy sharing an imaginary game of outings with the toy dolls.

Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff understand the children's needs and provide a sound range of activities and experiences that stimulate the children in their learning and development. Staff have some knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are enthusiastic in their work with the children. However, when staff are supporting children within play activities opportunities are missed to ask open questions and as a result children's thinking skills are not fully promoted. The setting observes children at play and notes details into children's learning story records. However, information from these records is not yet used entirely effectively within planning of activities and as a result children's individual learning needs are not robustly met. The newly appointed staff team work well together with the children and are keen to encourage them through regular praise. Children respond well to this encouragement and show a great deal of enthusiasm when participating in planned activities. Children are very keen to show others the toys they have brought in from home that begin with the letters 'L' , 'D' and 'F' smiling with pleasure when they remember the correct sound and letter.

Children are developing some personal independence skills. They put on sun hats and shoes for outside play and help to tidy up willingly carrying boxes to the cupboard at tidy up time. Children show care and concern for others. A child who is temporarily upset is quickly comforted by his friend with a cuddle and children share the ride on bikes well together.

Older children are confident and talk with ease about their families and move to big school. Children have regular access to books and they handle them appropriately. Staff make group stories interesting as they hold the book so that children can see the pictures and use their voice to hold younger children's attention. The clear labelling throughout the group helps children to understand that print carries meaning. Staff make use of phonics to reinforce the initial letters of words and help children to link sounds and letters. Early writing skills are well supported by staff. Children make marks within their routine play to represent their ideas and older children write their names competently. Children access a variety of tools to help them develop their small muscle tone. They use cutters, paintbrushes and glue spreaders confidently.

Children are developing some aspects of their mathematical thinking. They comment on the shape of the round ball when enjoying marble painting and look at the different heights of their bean stalks which are then recorded on a chart. Children discuss weight when cooking and are being introduced to floating and sinking concepts during water play. Whilst children have some opportunities to count the cups at refreshment time they have too few routine activities that promote their counting and number skills.

Children build and design using a variety of construction materials and they learn about the natural world by examining bugs. Children are developing confidence with technology as they work out how to use the cash till and they are learning all about themselves and what they like through the theme for the term 'my favourite ...'. Whilst children have some opportunities to learn about the wider world through looking at books they have too few planned activities that foster their interest in others and diversity. Children enjoy the prospect of freezing water and juice to make lollipops however, they have too few opportunities to discover why things happen and how things work.

Children have suitable opportunities to freely express themselves using a range of creative materials. They skilfully stick, paint to make patterns and create their own representations of animals and people in their families. Children enjoy short songs and find out what it is like to be a bus driver as they make their own bus from chairs and pretend to drive themselves to school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children from all backgrounds feel at home in the setting as they are valued and respected. Staff call the children by their names and look at them when they are speaking to show that they are interested in what they say and do. Consequently, children feel positive about themselves and are confident in this setting. Children are developing some understanding of the world around them when looking at books and playing with dolls from different countries. In this way children are beginning to be helped to learn about the wider world and others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Whilst the group are not caring for children with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities at this time staff are quick to recognise and act upon developmental delay. In this way all

children are helped to participate to the best of their ability. Staff work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure that all children's needs are met.

Children have competent support to help them manage their own behaviour. The staff praise children frequently when presenting positive behaviour so that they understand what is expected of them. Children learn right from wrong through the clear explanations that they are given when the staff ask them to change their behaviour. Staff are suitable role models because they are calm and courteous.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children's well-being is appropriately supported. Parents are welcomed and staff make time to talk with them on arrival about their children's needs for the day. Parents are given an accessible welcome brochure to explain the routines and policies to which the playgroup operates to keep them informed about what happens generally at the setting. However, details of what to do if the parents have concerns about the playgroup and complaints procedures are out of date. Therefore parents cannot be wholly assured about their children's welfare. Parents receive some information about the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage through the setting's prospectus and have regular opportunities to discuss their children's progress. However, not all parents are effectively asked to share what they know about their children's achievements and learning which prevents them from wholly engaging in the learning process to help secure their children's individual progress. Parents are invited to serve on the managing committee and regular newsletters help to keep them informed about any developments at the group. Consequently parents are supportive of the group and state that their children like attending, are happy and well cared for by the welcoming staff.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's welfare is generally safeguarded. Adults managing and working at the setting are vetted however records to demonstrate this are not easily available. As a result parents cannot be quickly assured regarding adult's suitability if needed. Most of the staff team hold appropriate early years qualifications to ensure they can offer a sound standard of care to the children. Staff have an appropriate understanding of how to organise the layout of the room to ensure children can eat in comfort, play actively and sit quietly. The children have a familiar routine and acceptable numbers of staff are in place to meet National Standards. However, at times only one member of staff is working directly with the children. This happens as staff undertake routine clearing tasks associated with the need for the room to be cleared for other users of the premises. The impact of this for the children is that they are not robustly supported in experiencing sustained, purposeful play to consolidate and extend their learning.

Children are able to make some choices about what they like to eat and are beginning to learn about self care and how to keep themselves clean and safe. However the setting has not organised resources so that they are readily accessible for children and they have too few opportunities to develop their independence and decision making skills. As a result children's sense of self-esteem and belief is not robustly promoted.

The leadership and management of the provision are satisfactory. The staff and committee are guided by aims that help them provide an appropriate environment in which children learn through play as evidenced by the progress that they are making. The voluntary organising committee supports the day to day running of the group and have been actively involved in ensuring that the setting has remained open by successfully appointing suitable staff. However,

children's well-being is not wholly supported. The setting have not established an effective evaluation and monitoring system to ensure all aspects of the National Standards are clearly met and children are robustly supported in their play and learning. The staff and committee are strongly committed to improving and developing the provision and are keen to review their practice with support from local authority advisors. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting were asked to conduct regular risk assessments, ensure procedures were clear about how to inform Ofsted about significant events, to update some aspects of the complaints procedures, ensure registration systems were accurate and to develop resources to promote equality. At the last education inspection the setting were asked to improve staff's knowledge about supporting and identifying children with potential special educational needs. The setting has made generally good progress on addressing the above points. However, the need to further update complaints procedures and promotion of equality remain aspects for further improvement for this inspection.

The setting has established a daily risk assessment procedure that involves staff completing a checklist to ensure the children are safe and the premises are free from hazards. The committee holds a records file which shows information about meetings and how they keep Ofsted informed of events at the setting. The name and address of the regulator is clearly available for parents within the setting policies should they wish to contact Ofsted. Attendees are clearly recorded on the register when they arrive and leave ensuring there is an accurate record of staff, children and visitors attendance at the setting. The children's toys and play equipment have been developed to more accurately reflect the wider world although diversity requires some additional promotion if children are to enjoy a rich anti-discriminatory environment. Staff have a sound understanding of children's developmental stages and the setting have a clear procedure which gives guidance to staff and parents about how the setting intends to support children who may have identified disabilities.

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):

- ensure plans are implemented for at least one member of staff to undertake current first aid training
- improve outcomes for younger children by developing staff's understanding about the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- update complaints procedures, fire drill practices and records and staff and committees understanding about what they should do if they have child protection concerns and ensure all setting records are always available for inspection
- improve organisation of staff clearing tasks and routines to actively support children in sustained, purposeful play and develop accessibility of resources to fully promote children's independence and decision making skills.

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's understanding about the Foundation stage to ensure children are consistently supported in developing their thinking skills
- make effective use of information held on children's assessment records within planning of activities to ensure children's individual learning needs are robustly supported
- improve opportunities for children to enjoy counting within routine activities, active play when needed to promote their large muscle tone, provide planned activities to further promote children's understanding of diversity and allow children to experience the regular joy of finding out why things happen and how things work
- improve opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's assessment records to securely promote children's learning through play.

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