

Corby Glen Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	260015
Inspection date	04 May 2007
Inspector	Janice Broddle

Setting Address	Ron Dawson Memorial Hall, Swinstead Road, Corby Glen, Nr Grantham, Lincs, NG33 4NU
Telephone number	07951918138
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Registered person	Corby Glen Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Corby Glen Playgroup is a committee-run provision. It has operated since 1968, moving to its current site, the Ron Dawson Hall, on the outskirts of Corby Glen village, in 1994. The playgroup uses the main hall for play and has access to kitchen, cloakroom and toilet facilities, all at ground floor level. They also have the use of an enclosed outside play area and the adjoining playing field.

The playgroup is open during term times only, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 09.00 to 15.00, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 09.00 to 12.00, although this varies according to demand. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 29 children on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for early education. Children attending come from the local rural communities of Corby Glen and surrounding villages. The playgroup currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are four permanent staff who work with the children. Two of these, including the supervisor, hold appropriate early years qualifications and all four are working towards a

recognised or higher qualification. The playgroup receives support from the Early Years Support Team from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted well because they are cared for in a clean and comfortable environment. Effective cleaning routines, along with written policies regarding children who are unwell, help to protect them from the risk of cross-infection. Children begin to gain an understanding of personal hygiene through daily routines which include hand washing before meals and after engaging in messy play. Effective support from adults supports their understanding of the importance of this. Required documents to promote children's health and welfare, such as accident and medication records, are all in place and contain a good level of detail.

Children have regular meals and are able to independently help themselves to drinking water throughout the session. Staff promote healthy eating through the provision of fresh fruit as part of snack times and by working effectively with parents to promote healthy options in children's lunch boxes. Planned activities help to support children's understanding of which foods are healthy and those which are less so. Staff evidence a comprehensive awareness of children's individual health and dietary needs which ensures that these are met.

The daily routine includes times for physical activities outdoors. Children thoroughly enjoy these sessions, they roll and chase their hoops, negotiating their way around obstacles, and practise their jumping and hopping skills. Children climb and balance with developing ease, well-supported by good quality resources which provide extended challenges for older children, although access to larger physical equipment is not routinely available during free play times. Children benefit from many good opportunities to develop their fine motor skills and use small tools with developing skill, for example, practising scissor control and cutting skills and manipulating knives to spread honey on their bread. Nutritious daily drinks and snacks help to support their understanding of a healthy diet.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a well-maintained and secure environment. Play areas are spacious, allowing children to comfortably explore their play materials. They are able to rest and relax in comfortable surroundings should they wish. Toys and play equipment are age-appropriate and conform to safety standards and there are suitable systems in place to ensure that they remain safe for children to use. Children are able to reach toys safely as they are stored at child height.

Staff and the committee are currently in the process of reviewing the risk assessments to further improve children's safety within the setting by ensuring all staff are aware of daily safety routines to reduce potential hazards and minimise the risk of accidents. Children are kept safe on outings because staff vigilantly supervise the children and implement appropriate safety procedures.

Staff carefully monitor access to the building and clear procedures are in place for the collection of children by named adults. Consequently, children are well-protected. All members of staff

have a sound awareness of child protection policies and procedures; they are aware of possible indicators of abuse and know the relevant agencies to contact if they have concerns. The supervisor has attended relevant training to enhance her knowledge. As a result, children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the provision, they arrive happy and eager to participate. Staff are kind and caring and have developed warm relationships with them, enabling them to feel secure, to confidently engage in play and express their needs and wishes. Children freely explore the wide range of activities and are developing strong independence skills through being able to select a wide range of resources themselves. They make progress in their development as they incidentally learn through play and participate in an interesting range of planned activities. Staff adapt these to ensure that younger children receive an appropriate level of support. Staff are in the early stages of using the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are developing systems to monitor young children's individual progress in order to more effectively plan for their next stages of development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The play group leader has a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and newer staff are participating in ongoing training sessions to develop an understanding of the stepping stones of learning. Children enjoy a wide range of planned activities, covering the six areas of learning. Staff are fully aware of their role within these activities and support children well by using effective questioning and adapting activities to meet their differing levels of ability. However, they do not routinely make use of daily routines to reinforce children's practical learning, for example, by using snack times as counting and calculating opportunities. Aside from the planned activity during each session, there is a strong emphasis on child-led activities. Staff organise these well to provide many opportunities for children to make their own choices regarding their play and to explore their own ideas, promoting their independence, self esteem, imagination and creativity. However, over-familiarity with the range of toys, combined at times with limited support and direction from adults, leads to lack of stimulation and challenge for some of the older and more-able children. As a result, their behaviour sometimes deteriorates as the session progresses. Additionally, the organisation of some daily routines, such as singing time followed by snack time, has not been fully considered to best meet the needs of all children. This means that, as some children lose the ability to sit still and concentrate, they begin to display unwanted behaviour. Staff's calm and consistent methods for managing behaviour are effective although, as the number of unwanted incidents increase as children's interest in their environment wanes, staff prioritise managing behaviour over promoting learning. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is monitored with some good quality, informative observations, although the information gained is not yet effectively used to plan children's next steps to help them progress further.

Children are happy and settled. They demonstrate good personal independence, confidently moving around their environment and freely choosing their activities, they pour their own drinks at snack time and persevere for lengthy periods to peg their own pictures on the drier. They build strong relationships with staff and each other, many play together in small groups and welcome others in. They are aware of expectations for behaviour although some older children do not always comply with these. Children confidently talk to each other and adults, asking questions and seeking support when necessary. They enjoy story times, contributing

with enthusiasm and freely select from a wide range of age-appropriate books, which helps to foster their enjoyment of reading. Children use a wide range of materials to make marks and practise writing for different purposes, for example in the role play area, but older and more-able children are not sufficiently helped to link letters to sounds. Children count confidently, and have learnt a variety of number rhymes to introduce them to the concepts of addition and subtraction. There is a suitable range of equipment to support children's mathematical development although the maths table remains mostly un-visited. Children are keen explorers. They learn about the natural world as they excitedly hunt for mini beasts in the grass and investigate the similarities and differences between thick and runny honey. They build with construction sets, freely selecting and experimenting with different methods for joining bricks together. Children enthusiastically talk about events in their own lives and, through planned activities, they are beginning to learn about the wider world. Opportunities for exploring and using technology however, are infrequent. Children enjoy using a wide range of tools and materials to explore media, they participate enthusiastically with craft activities and use their own ideas to paint pictures. They engage animatedly in the role play area where they act out the role of the vet or the Doctor. Children build a repertoire of songs, joining in with actions and words. They listen to nursery rhymes as they play but have less frequent opportunities to freely explore instruments or experience a wider range of music types.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and respected. They develop a sense of belonging and their own self-worth as they easily access their personal pocket for their own belongings, see their work attractively displayed around the environment and make their own decisions regarding their play. Staff gather appropriate information from parents from the outset in order that they are aware of children's individual needs, such as medical or dietary requirements, to ensure that these can be met. Although there is some equipment in place that reflects positive images of our diverse society and the wider world, this is in limited quantities, which impacts on staff's ability to raise children's awareness of differences fully effectively. However, children explore a variety of cultural beliefs by celebrating a range of festivals as part of the curriculum. Staff have good links with other professionals to seek appropriate advice to support them in meeting the needs of children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Children are generally well-behaved, although at times, the behaviour of some children deteriorates due to organisational factors. Staff manage unwanted behaviour appropriately, taking into consideration their knowledge of individual children. Staff are good role models and create a warm and friendly environment. Children form positive relationships with staff and with each other and play co-operatively together, learning to share and take turns during supervised activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff develop good relationships with parents. They gather appropriate information on admission to ensure consistency of care for children. Parents are welcomed into the setting and staff make themselves available to share relevant information on a daily basis. Parents have access to a suitable range of information about the setting, including relevant policies and procedures, and receive regular newsletters, keeping them informed about practices and current issues within the setting. Parents have the opportunity to become involved in the setting through membership of the committee and the newly formed committee are in the process of updating information regarding their roles and responsibilities along with the range of information available to all parents.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for nursery education is satisfactory. There is some basic written information for parents within the prospectus that describes the curriculum, although it does not fully explain how it is delivered in the setting. Staff invite parents to be involved in their child's learning through termly newsletters which, although lacking specific detail, do include some basic information about topics. Details of children's progress is shared informally between the key worker and parent but systems to enable parents to share what they know about their child at the outset or contribute to development records have not yet been established.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who are suitably vetted and qualified. The playgroup is coming through a recent period of change with newly recruited members of staff and a newly formed committee. The committee are in the early stages of development but they have established effective links with other organisations and professionals to help them establish a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. There is evidence of sound leadership skills within the newly devised action plan along with their clear vision for the future of the group. The staff team demonstrate a commitment to improving the care and learning of children through their attendance at regular meetings, undertaking of appropriate training and their links with other relevant professionals. At this point in time, the changes underway are still in the very early stages and have not yet fully impacted on children's care and learning.

Children develop strong independence skills as space and resources are well-organised to encourage them to make their own choices regarding their play and activities. However, the organisation of daily routines and deployment of staff are not always fully effective in ensuring children are purposefully engaged for the duration of the session. Children's health, safety and well-being is promoted as all legally required documentation is in place along with children's records. These contain an appropriate level of information to ensure that staff can meet children's individual needs. Policies and procedures are in place and although these currently contain minimal information, the newly formed committee are in the process of working with the staff team in reviewing and updating these in order to maximise their effectiveness in supporting the efficient and safe management and running of the provision.

The leadership and management of funded children is satisfactory. The newly formed committee provide a good level of support and communicate with staff on a regular basis. However, whilst there are informal opportunities to see what is being delivered in the setting, they have not yet established fully effective systems to monitor the quality of the education being provided. A period of change in the playgroup means that senior staff are concentrating on offering the necessary support and guidance to those new in post. The newly formed team evidence a strong commitment to enhance their skills and knowledge; they are all working towards a recognised early years qualification, senior staff towards a higher level, and staff are working closely with relevant professionals to develop their understanding of the Foundation Stage. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the setting agreed to three recommendations regarding children's care. They agreed to review the special educational needs statement and this is now consistent with current legislation and guidance. They also agreed to ensure the complaints procedure includes the address and telephone number of the regulator and this information is now clearly displayed

on the parents' notice board, facilitating parents' ability to comment on the provision to the regulator should they wish. They also agreed to improve staff's knowledge of child protection and relevant literature is now in place and the supervisor has attended appropriate training to enhance her knowledge and understanding, which helps to safeguard children attending the setting.

At the last inspection, the setting agreed to two recommendations with regard to nursery education. They agreed to evaluate and improve the organisation of the equipment and singing times. Children now have more opportunities to select their own songs during singing times and new portable storage units with labelled boxes provide many opportunities for children to select their own equipment, therefore promoting their ability to make independent choices in their play. They also agreed to develop the procedures for supporting children with learning difficulties or disabilities. A new policy, which is under regular review, is now in place. There is an identified member of staff to support such children, who has attended relevant training and effective links have been established with other relevant professionals, therefore improving the care and support of these children.

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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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 outcomes for children under three by implementing an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- continue to extend the range of resources that promote positive images of the wider world to raise children's awareness and understanding and to help them learn to appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences
- ensure that the organisation of daily routines and the deployment of staff is effective throughout the session in maximising the use of available resources in order to maintain children's interest and progress their learning (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):

- develop planning to ensure that all areas of learning are covered equally and frequently and that daily routines provide opportunities for children's practical learning; and continue to develop staff's understanding of the use of assessments to identify the next steps in their learning
- ensure that parents receive good quality information about the provision of nursery education and their child's progress and are encouraged to be involved in their learning and gather appropriate information from them in order to identify starting points for children's learning to enable staff to build on what children already know
- develop the systems to monitor and evaluate the delivery of nursery education to identify its effectiveness for all 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