

# Brearley Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	229137
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Carol Johnson
<b>Setting Address</b>	Brearley Nursery School, Brearley Street, Newtown, Birmingham, West Midlands, B19 3XJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 359 2309
<b>E-mail</b>	head@brearley.bham.sch.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	The Governing Body of Brearley Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

At the time of the inspection there were no children in receipt of nursery education. Ofsted judges that the provider remains suitable to provide nursery education.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Brearley Playgroup opened in 2000 and is part of the Brearley/Teviot Children's Centre in Birmingham. It operates from several rooms within Brearley Nursery School and children have access to a secure outdoor play area. The provision includes a playgroup, out of school club and a crèche. The setting serves the local area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the provision at any one time. Sessions operate term time only. The playgroup opens 4 days a week and the out of school club opens each weekday. A playscheme is offered during the school holidays. The crèche is in place to support parents attending family learning sessions and runs as and when required.

There are currently 35 children from two to eight years on roll using the provision. There were no children receiving funding for early education present at the time of inspection. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup has good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and currently supports several children who speak English as an additional language.

There are ten staff members who work directly with the children, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The provision receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are effectively protected from the spread of infection because they are cared for in a very clean and healthy environment. Toys and equipment are well maintained and cleaned on a regular basis. Staff members are good role models and ensure that children follow good hygiene procedures. Children are encouraged to be independent with regards to their personal care and have easy access to liquid soap and paper hand towels.

Children benefit, in the event of illness or a medical emergency, from a clear written sickness policy that ensures that parents are aware of the setting's health procedures. Parents are informed of the provision's procedures for administering medication and know not to send children who are clearly unwell and pose a potential health risk to others. First aid supplies are well-stocked and easily accessible and staff are suitably trained in first aid procedures.

Children's dietary needs are well met because they are offered a wide range of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. For example, children attending after school are offered a range of foods including cheese on toast, pizza, salad and pasta. Playgroup children generally have a snack of fruit during sessions but can choose to have a school dinner one day a week. Cookery activities regularly take place and these, along with being fun, help teach children about hygiene and encourage them to try a wider range of foods. For example, children have made cakes, soup and fruit skewers. Meal times are well-organised to promote safety and staff sit with children and actively encourage social skills and table manners. Children are effectively protected from the risks associated with special dietary needs and food allergies because all staff are aware of individual requirements and relevant information is recorded and respected. Children are not at risk from dehydration as drinks are freely available.

Children benefit from lots of physical play and exercise that helps to develop their muscles, co-ordination and confidence. There is plenty of outdoor space for children to run about, enjoy fresh air and generally let off steam. The outdoor area is used on a daily basis and resources to support children's physical play are plentiful and easily accessible. For example, children have access to soft play equipment, a parachute and a variety of balls and wheeled toys. Indoors, children enjoy music and they dance and join in with action songs.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the provision's spacious and welcoming premises. Displays are bright and attractive and include examples of children's work, photographs of staff and children and general information about the setting. Consequently, children are helped to develop a sense of belonging and parents are given lots of visual information about what their children are doing and how the setting operates. Space, both inside and outside, is effectively arranged to provide different areas for rest and play. Resources to support children's play and learning are organised well and help to encourage children's independence and freedom of choice. Home corner equipment is at children's level so they can move it easily and safely. Tables are at child

height which makes it easier for them to access activities and learn to use equipment safely and competently.

A wide variety of security and safety precautions are in place and children's safety in the event of a need to evacuate the premises is well protected. Children and all adults in the setting are given regular opportunities to practise emergency evacuation procedures and staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Fire safety equipment is in place and exits are marked and kept clear. All staff have completed health and safety training and some written risk assessments are in place. Staff carry out regular visual checks on resources and all areas of the premises and they teach children to protect their own safety. For example, children are told to take care when handling natural materials such as holly leaves and they know that they must not run when inside. However, children's safety is potentially compromised as current risk assessments do not take into consideration the possible risks associated with some resources and activities. For example, the potential risks to playgroup children when using the nursery school play areas.

Children's welfare is well protected because staff understand their role in child protection. They demonstrate a clear knowledge and understanding of the possible symptoms of child abuse and they know what action to take if they have concerns about a child. Staff are aware that their first priority is children's safety. Children are not left unsupervised with persons who have not been vetted and they are only released into the care of known individuals.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide variety of activities that help to improve their all-round development. They are happy and eager to participate and learn. Activities meet children's needs and staff demonstrate a good knowledge of individual children. They regularly observe children to assess their needs and individual starting points. Children's experiences are flexibly planned to reflect their views and changing interests. They are given the freedom to make choices, develop their ideas and to express their creativity in a variety of ways. Good quality resources support children's learning. These include a wide variety of equipment for use indoors and outside, for example, large construction materials, wheeled toys and role play resources. Staff also have access to additional resources belonging to the nursery school.

Information regarding past activities is shared with parents and this helps them to have meaningful conversations with their children about what they have been doing during their time in the provision. Photographs are used extensively to record experiences and weekly diaries are produced which offer additional information about what children have done the previous week. Activities and experiences offered at the out of school provision include board games, craft activities and music. Staff within the out of school club enjoy friendly relationships with the children, who in turn treat them with respect. During a well-managed parachute play activity children listened attentively to staff instructions. They held on to the parachute and responded appropriately when asked to move it fast and slow. Children and staff worked co-operatively to move the ball in a variety of ways.

Children are treated with kindness and concern and confidently interact with adults and each other. Staff listen to children and show that their contributions are acknowledged and valued. Playgroup children, staff and some parents recently went on an outing to 'Sutton Park' and they collected a range of natural materials. These materials, including leaves, fir cones and feathers were then brought back to playgroup and placed in a large tray for children to explore. Staff encouraged children to describe and explore the various textures of the materials and to

recall the outing. They did this through listening to their comments, using open-ended questioning and patiently waiting for their responses. Also, photographs were taken during the outing and these were also cleverly used by staff to stimulate discussion and increase children's range of vocabulary.

## Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are no children currently attending who receive funding for nursery education. However, playgroup staff describe how current activities are typical of those previously offered to such children and are used help all children progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and clearly explain how they support children's learning through a wide range of carefully facilitated experiences that respond to children's individual needs and interests.

Staff regularly exchange information with parents to gauge children's changing needs and interests. They describe how they make the effort to create a trusting relationship with children and their parents and this in turn creates a climate in which children feel confident to tackle new challenges and take risks. When children start in the provision parents are asked to share what they know about their children so that staff can gain an understanding of children's needs and starting points. Staff explain how they share individual children's progress with parents on an ongoing basis, both verbally and through written records.

Staff describe how they plan as a team and use elements of the 'Reggio Emilia' philosophy to shape their thinking. Play is regularly observed to ensure progression and children are given freedom to make choices and solve problems independently. Through discussion staff members demonstrate a clear knowledge of what they hope children will gain from planned activities and how they intend to move children on in their next steps in learning. Staff explain how, as a team, during daily discussions and weekly staff meetings they share observations of children and evaluations of activities and this information is used to inform planning and assessments. However, written evaluations are sometimes vague, information regarding next steps for individual children is not always recorded and written observations are limited. Consequently, children's welfare is potentially compromised as there is limited written information for staff to refer to when assessing children's individual needs, planning and implementing activities and when completing children's progress records.

Plans show that children are able to take part in a wide range of experiences and photographs of children's during play and examples of their work confirm this. For example, children went on an outing to a local shop where they bought fruit and vegetables. They wrote shopping lists and this helped to increase their mark making skills and understanding of using writing for a purpose. The role play area was turned into a fruit and vegetable shop to extend children's learning and stimulate imagination. Children pretended to be shopkeepers and customers and a till was introduced and children used money to buy the produce. They weighed the produce using scales and used real fruit and vegetables in cookery activities, for example, making cauliflower cheese.

Staff clearly describe how they use a range of teaching methods to extend children's learning and experiences and use observation to assess how they need to extend and support individual children. A member of staff explained how she watched a small group of children showing a strong interest in building models using wooden bricks. She noted the complexity of their models and how the children built them with a definite purpose. The staff team then discussed

this at their next planning meeting and their discussions lead to larger blocks being introduced into the children's play and the activity being moved to the hall, where there is more space. This interest in construction was then extended into 'junk' modelling.

Children have access to a wide range of resources to support all the areas of learning and to suit children at different stages of development. A wide range of books are easily accessible and staff regularly share books, stories and songs with children. Staff gauge children's levels of concentration and communication and thoughtfully split them into small supportive groups at shared story times. Easily recognisable objects are used to illustrate songs and rhymes and this benefits all children and is particularly supportive to those learning English as an additional language. Staff describe how creativity is encouraged throughout the curriculum and resources to support this area plentiful. Plans show that children have used clay, paint and dough to express their ideas and water has been used to paint the slabs outside. They also demonstrate how children's physical development is consistently encouraged, both indoors and outside.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Self-esteem is flourishing in an environment where children are warmly welcomed and individuality is recognised and celebrated. Examples of children's work adorn the walls of the provision and these along with photographs of them taken during play ensure that children's learning and achievements are visible to all. Every child is helped to achieve their potential because staff take time and make the effort to get to know individual children and their families. Children with English as an additional language are well supported as staff effectively use their observations of these children, along with discussions with their parents, to discover the best ways to help them to settle, communicate and achieve. Resources that reflect diversity and children's home experiences are plentiful and these help children to settle and develop a sense of belonging. For example, children can access a wide range of books, role play equipment, puzzles and small world figures.

The nursery has excellent systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting's admission policy is inclusive ensuring children and their families are not discriminated against. This is evident in all policies and practice. Staff have attended a wealth of relevant training and plan and monitor activities that build on what children already know and can do. The setting works collaboratively with parents and/or carers and has excellent links with other professionals, for example, health visitors, speech therapists and educational psychologists.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children behave well because they know what is expected of them. Staff expectations are high and children receive clear guidance with regards to rules and boundaries. Staff provide children with good role models and react to situations calmly and consistently. Children are caring and considerate towards each other and respond positively to staff requests, for example, to help tidy away toys. Staff use a range of positive and developmentally appropriate methods for managing children's behaviour. Strategies are shared with parents to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Relationships are effectively enhanced and supported because staff and parents work together to help children learn and develop. The setting actively seeks the views of parents and carers and lots of positive comments have been received via questionnaires given out following the holiday play scheme. For example, parents

comment on the professional and welcoming staff and the wide range of activities available to their children. Children's well-being is increased because lots of useful information is shared to ensure consistency of care. Notice boards are used to display photographs of staff, community information and details of activities enjoyed by the children.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and the provision as a whole. The provision is part of the Brearley and Teviot Children's Centre and parents and/or carers can access the many family support services that are available, for example, 'Stay and Play' sessions. A community room is available for parents to informally meet up away from the home environment and a range of toys and books can be loaned. Parents receive regular newsletters and are invited to share, with staff and children, any expertise or knowledge that they may have. For example, they are invited to read to children in their home language or assist staff by sharing their knowledge of cultural and religious festivals.

The parents and carers of children receiving funding for early education receive additional information to help them understand the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are invited to an open evening where the head teacher explains the curriculum and how it is implemented within the setting. Also, parents are formally invited to discuss their children's progress on an annual basis. Staff share their observations of children, discuss assessment records and explain how their children are progressing along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Each child has a folder of their work, gathered over the course of the year and this is given to parents at the end of their child's time in the playgroup.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. The management team monitors all aspects of the provision and helps to inspire and support a committed and enthusiastic staff team. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and management ensure that new staff receive a thorough induction to ensure that they are able to effectively implement the setting's policies and procedures.

Children and their parents positively benefit from the dedication and commitment from staff members, evidenced through their everyday good practice, qualifications and continuing professional development. The provision has recently achieved a 'Silver' quality assurance award and continual reflective practice is evident throughout the provision. Staff have attended a wealth of training courses and regular staff meetings ensures clear and open communication channels between all staff in the provision and contributes to consistency of care for children.

Staffing is organised well to enhance children's welfare and safety. Staff members work cohesively as a team and are well aware of their individual and collective roles and responsibilities. Staff within the provision are constant and this along with the familiar daily routine enjoyed by children helps to foster children's sense of security. Small group sizes within playgroup encourage children to participate, learn and gain confidence.

Documentation to ensure the safe and effective management of the setting is suitably organised and it is generally well maintained. However, children's well-being is potentially compromised as attendance records, for the playgroup, do not always include children's arrival and departure time. Space and resources, within the nursery, are creatively and attractively organised and children's experiences are carefully planned by the staff team. Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure that documentation was specific to the setting and that the complaints procedure included Ofsted contact details. Policies and procedures have been reviewed and they now contain all required information. Consequently, children's welfare is improved.

The provider was also asked to improve the presentation of planning records, for children in receipt of nursery education funding, to ensure they clearly demonstrate the learning objectives to be achieved. Children's learning experiences have been improved as new planning sheets have been devised that clearly identify what it is that staff hope children will learn from the range of experiences offered. The learning objectives for chosen activities are identified and recorded on these sheets and this information acts as a reminder to staff of their intentions for children's 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

At the time of the inspection there were no children in receipt of nursery education. Ofsted judges that the provider remains suitable to provide nursery education.

### **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 the hours of attendance for children are accurately recorded.
- improve current systems for risk assessment to ensure that all potential risks to children are identified and minimised.

#### **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):

- further develop systems for observation, evaluation and assessment to inform children's progress records and to ensure that children's individual needs and next steps are clearly identified.



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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)