

Sheffield Volunteering- Saturday Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	300756
Inspection date	23 February 2008
Inspector	Geneen Yvonne Hulse-Brown
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Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Out of School 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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sheffield Volunteering Playgroup opened in 1996. The playgroup is located in the University Nursery annex building, in the Broomhall area of Sheffield. The group offers respite care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and their siblings from all over the city. They meet in a large playroom with access to toilets, kitchen and storage space. There is a secure outdoor play area to the front of the building and the group take the children on numerous outings every term.

The group cares for a maximum of 15 children aged from three to eight years. There are currently nine children on roll. The group offers sessional play care on Saturdays 10.00 to 14.00 during university term time for a maximum of 20 weeks a year.

There are two staff employed to work with the children and both hold early years qualifications, university volunteers are present at every session. This is a voluntary organisation run by Sheffield Volunteering, who are funded by Sheffield University Student's Union and Children in Need. The playgroup is a member of Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enthusiastically enjoy a wide range of physical activities that effectively contributes to their good health. They actively choose between playing indoors and outdoors, moving between the areas throughout sessions as they build their physical skills. The children enjoy playing games, as they race scooters along play roads and climb with increasing confidence. Children demonstrate a good understanding of how their bodies work, knowing when they are hot or cold, need a drink or are hungry. They help themselves to water, as they pour their own drinks with increasing skill, however they have limited opportunities to pour drinks and help prepare food at snack times. Children enthusiastically use many opportunities to talk to staff and extend their understanding about being healthy through the use of projects and planned topics. They enjoy regular outings to the Butterfly Farm and swimming, as part of termly activities and excitedly recall these events at group times.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment, where they are encouraged and supported to develop good personal hygiene practices, such as hand washing before snack and after baking. Children understand the importance of good practice and demonstrate it in their play, reminding each other to wash their hands when sticky from handling gingerbread.

Children demonstrate a good understanding of a healthy diet, as staff talk about healthy eating as part of daily routines. Children bring packed lunches to playgroup and talk to each other and adults about what is good for them. Effective use of topics and themes help children explore where foods come from, learn about how they grow and try new tastes. Children make choices about what to have for snack, although they do not help in the preparation of their snacks. They eat together around small tables in a social setting, where they spend time chatting about their day and home events. Staff consider children's individual dietary and cultural needs when planning snacks and baking activities and respond accordingly.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where all potential risks are minimised. They confidently negotiate their way around the setting both indoors and outdoors independently and safely. Staff use regular reminders to help the children learn about keeping themselves safe and plan topics and outings to consolidate their understanding. For example, looking at road safety when playing on pretend roads and on outings, by encouraging the children to talk about good practice and develop their understanding of keeping safe.

Children make active choices of equipment and activities from a broad range of easily accessible resources and request anything they cannot see. Creatively planned areas allow them space to be quiet, enjoy craft activities, play board games and enthusiastically express themselves using their imagination in well resourced role play areas. A large well stocked outdoor play area allows them space to let off steam and enjoy physical activities.

Effective procedures are in place to support good practice and help children to keep themselves safe both indoors and out. Staff hold current first aid certificates, and demonstrate a good understanding of child protection procedures and how to protect children from harm. Staff and volunteers all complete basic child protection training with regular updates as needed. The

leader has attended the Local Safeguarding Children Board training and is in the process of updating the comprehensive policy to reflect change to legislation.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well as they arrive eager and ready to undertake the wide range of activities provided. They become quickly immersed in their chosen activity as they race around outdoors, act out roles in the hospital and play the snail race board game. Children are confident and interested in their surroundings as they interact well with staff and each other, supporting younger children to gain confidence. They build good relationships with each other and strong friendships, playing in groups and helping each other. For example, when baking offering suggestions of what to do next and how to spread the icing on the gingerbread men. The children sit patiently as they wait their turn to weigh flour, add sugar and mix in the mixture before getting pieces of dough to mould into gingerbread men. They have limited opportunities to use individual bowls and tools during baking activities.

Children choose from a wide variety of planned activities and access others by choice. They relax alone in the book corner, concentrate at the computer, confidently join in group games and enthusiastically undertake creative activities. Children benefit from individual attention from staff who have a clear understanding of the children's individual needs and work effectively to support them to reach their full potential. Staff offer support in games and play with the children to extend their thinking and enhance their play. Children are well motivated and enjoy their time at playgroup, making choices to meet their own needs and interests. The children are very curious and interested in visitors to the setting, asking what they are doing and involving them in their games. They enjoy dressing up and checking the adults blood pressure and heart beats as they take turns to be doctor.

Staff support the children to extend and try out new skills, as they offer consistent help and guidance appropriate to their ages and abilities. Staff listen with interest and respond to the children offering suggestions, discussing issues related to projects and sharing home experiences. Excellent use of photographs and memory books record what the children do and promote many conversations where they recall events together and discuss future plans.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children build strong, respectful relationships with staff and relate well to each other. They demonstrate good self-esteem to confidently make their opinions known, ask questions and make secure independent choices. Children's behaviour is good, they understand the group's expectations, as they are actively involved in making the group's rules. Staff support the children in learning to share and take turns, by sensitively mediating with them to help them understand rules and develop their awareness of boundaries.

All children are involved and supported to enjoy and participate in all activities provided at their own level of understanding and abilities. They receive high levels of adult support to ensure they achieve their full potential. Children receive many opportunities to extend their independence and try new skills. They are highly valued, respected and learning to show respect for each other.

Children enthusiastically use a wide variety of stimulating resources to learn about the wider world and extend their understanding of others. They enjoy outings to extend their understanding of their local environment and benefit from visit to places, such as to the Butterfly farm to see the animals. Outings are integral to the playgroups' planning as the children undertake visits to the museum, swimming and parks as a major part of every term. In-house sessions are planned around the weekly outings for the children.

Relationships with parents are good, as they are welcomed to the setting and encouraged to participate in activities and events. Good communication systems are in place to ensure that parents are well informed about playgroup practice and day to day events. Policies and procedures are clearly available to parents during sessions and staff are readily available for discussion as needed. Staff recognise and respect the children's individuality, using care plans and discussions with parents to effectively find out about their specific needs. Children have fun in the playgroup, enthusiastically make themselves at home and confidently make choices about what they want to do.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are very relaxed, motivated and challenged in a happy and stimulating environment. Staff provide extensive support to help them initiate and progress their own play. Effective systems and procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the group's practices and regular reviews ensure that information up to date. An experienced, enthusiastic staff team work very well together, supported by a strong team of volunteers from the university to ensure children receive individual attention and support. The management team has a high commitment to staff training and development to consolidate their practice. In-house training is given to volunteers to ensure that have a good induction package and a basic knowledge of childcare practice.

A comprehensive range of policies and procedures are in place and the manager is in the process of updating all policies to meet the changes to legislation. Policies are regularly reviewed to support the existing good practice and delivery of an effective service. Well organised routines ensure all sessions are consistent, and creative use of all available space enables children to enjoy an interesting, stimulating and challenging environment. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous recommendation relating to acknowledging comments made by parents has been successfully addressed by the use of volunteer forms, which inform parents of the experience and childcare understanding of volunteer workers. This effectively contributes to the group making a positive contribution to children's development.

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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

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):

- consider offering children additional opportunities to extend their independence
- continue to review policies and procedures to ensure they meet changes to legislation.

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