

Plumbland Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	317577
Inspection date	07 March 2008
Inspector	Donna Suzanne Lancaster
Setting Address	Parsonby, Aspatria, Wigton, Cumbria, CA7 2DQ
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Registered person	The Trustees of Plumbland Pre-School 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?

Plumbland Playgroup was registered in 1990. It is located within Plumbland Primary School in the village of Plumbland approximately 20 miles west of Carlisle. The playgroup serves the immediate and extended rural communities. The group occupy a classroom within the school and parents use a dedicated entrance to the playgroup room. During registered session times, the playgroup has sole use of the playroom. Children have access to the main playroom, school toilets, the enclosed play area annexed to the playroom, the school playground and the school adventure playground.

The group is registered to care for 15 children and there are currently 10 children on roll, of whom, six are funded by the nursery education grant. The playgroup operates Monday to Friday, 12:30 - 15:00 during term time.

There are two part time staff and one relief member of staff. All staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications. Parents also participate in the playgroup on a voluntary basis when needed.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted by the good standards of hygiene and cleanliness which are maintained in the playgroup. Effective procedures, such as staff wearing disposable gloves for nappy changing, washing tables with anti-bacterial wipes before snack and washing hands before serving food, maintains hygiene standards and prevents the spread of infection. Staff offer support and guidance to children to help them gain an understanding of hygiene routines and begin to become increasingly independent in their personal care. For example, older children know washing hands with soap stops germs spreading. Children are well taken care of if they have an accident, require medication or become ill because documentation fully meets requirements and the sickness policy is implemented to protect the health of all children attending. Although the staff have recently updated their first aid certificates, this did not cover first aid for babies and young children and the course was not of the prescribed length required under the National Standards. Therefore, a requirement of registration has been partially breached.

Children have the benefit of daily exercise and learn about adopting a healthy lifestyle, as the door is left open throughout the session, this allows the children to play outdoors freely. Children use the large school playground to practise their large motor skills, such as riding bikes and scooters, balancing, climbing and running races in large open areas. The children successfully stop and start the bikes when they have races. All children physical development is further developed when they make shapes, animals and do breathing exercises during their once a week Yoga lessons.

Children benefit from and some enjoy fresh fruit and vegetable sticks offered at snack time. However, chocolate biscuits are offered as an alternative to children who do not like fruit. This does not fully promote healthy eating with children. Children are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy diet through discussions with staff at snack time about which foods are good for you and which are not. Children's individual needs are taken into account through discussion with parents to ensure they remain healthy. Fresh drinking water is always available to children and they independently access the drinks dispenser at snack time and throughout the session.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Staff ensure that children are not at risk from unauthorised adults by checking identification and operating a strict signing in and out system for all visitors. The environment is warm and welcoming to children and families. There are attractive displays of children's work and information for parents. Suitable written risk assessments are in place so that staff recognise potential hazards and take steps to minimise these on a daily basis. For example, they check that children are unable to access electrical sockets and they check the outdoor play area before children go out to play. However, the main school gate is not secure when children use the school playground. This compromises children's safety at times.

Children's welfare is maintained as staff understand the Local Safeguarding Children Board's guidance and are clear about their responsibility to safeguard the child. They have a good

knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse and have clear procedures to follow in the event of a concern. Parents are made aware of the playgroup's responsibility through information in the playgroup booklet.

Children are beginning to learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, young children are advised kindly by staff that they must not run indoors, they know that they must line up and wait for everyone to go to the toilet and they know they must be quiet when walking through the school to get to the toilet area. Children are also encouraged to tidy toys away before getting more toys out and at the end of the session. This is effectively supported by explanations which ensure that children develop a secure understanding. Good emergency evacuation procedures are implemented, ensuring children know what to do in an emergency, and staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. All resources are maintained to a good standard and most are presented at low-level or on the floor, which ensures that children can easily access them and develop independence.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup and they arrive happy and settle well. Staff work well together to meet children's needs. They are sensitive in their handling and give lots of praise and encouragement to help promote children's self-esteem. Younger children are interested in a suitable range of developmentally appropriate indoor activities. For example, cutting and sticking, play dough, construction and outdoor play. All children enjoy good relationships with the staff and approach them confidently. They relate well to their peers, beginning to socialise. Younger children's communication and language skills are beginning to develop and they enthusiastically join in with familiar songs and rhymes. All children thoroughly enjoy looking at books and reciting familiar stories.

Staff have introduced 'Birth to three' assessment records to improve their practice, however, these do not clearly or effectively show when children have achieved or their next steps in their development. Children have free-flow access to activities throughout the session. They happily move around the room choosing from the selection of resources and activities. This enables the children to practise and develop their own skills, however, this approach does not always allow for staff to sufficiently build on children's existing skills, or to fully assess their progress and plan for children's future learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have an acceptable understanding of the Foundation Stage. The manager plans a suitable range of activities which are linked to the six areas of learning and are appropriate to enable the children to be motivated and make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Staff observe children's achievements in their play experiences, but do not consistently and effectively evaluate what they have observed in order to help them plan the next steps in all children's learning. Focused activity sheets have been introduced but do not show differentiation for individual children's learning needs. This results in children not being challenged sufficiently in order to move to the next stage of their learning. Staff observe children's achievements in their play experiences and complete assessment records. However, children's observation records do not clearly link to the areas of learning and the stepping stones, in order to identify appropriate challenge and next steps in all children's learning. This results in older children not being challenged sufficiently in order to move to the next stage of their learning.

Children confidently join in with familiar nursery rhymes. They thoroughly enjoy listening to stories and often access the book area independently. They sit on their own or beside each other and recite familiar stories, such as 'Little Red Riding Hood' They handle books carefully and turn the pages correctly. The children's pre-writing skills are satisfactory and some children can name the initial letter of their name. There is a mark making area, however, this is not sufficiently extended into other areas of the nursery or used in everyday activities.

Children have opportunities to develop their creative skills through arts and crafts, such as painting, gluing and sticking. They are beginning to develop their imagination in role-play, for example, they knock on the play house door and pretend to be monsters. Children show interest in exploring textures as they play with the play dough. Interesting sensory questions enable children to experiment and explore smells, taste, colours and textures in a variety of different mediums. For example, they smell and tasted the play dough, a child said 'it smells like play dough and tastes like salt.' He at first said it was hard, but thought and felt it again and said it was 'soft and cold.' Many children demonstrate their independence, for example, they independently access the toilet and wash their hands; they confidently put on their own hats and coats, and some of the older children help the younger ones. Staff encourage the children to get their own drinks from the drinks dispenser and they help to put the plates on the table at snack time. They confidently differentiate between a variety of colours whilst putting the chairs in the play house outside. Staff are very skilled in asking children challenging questions, for example, what if?, what would happen?, what do you think?, this enables children to move their learning forward and supports children if they are struggling. Children understand they must wait for their turn.

Children are beginning to count, for example, how many plates for snack, how many feet the animals have. They are beginning to use positional language throughout activities, such as above, below and sideways. They can compare size, for example, one child referred to teeth as long and small teeth with a gap in them, another child said 'it is only a small gap' They understand the concept of big and small, and talk about the small playground and the big playground, where the older children play. However, children do not have sufficient opportunities to recognise numerals; match objects; use simple calculating or problem solving in everyday routines and activities. Children use some programmable toys and have access to the computer.

Children participate well in yoga and exercise sessions. They extend their large physical skills well through a variety of experiences including regular use of outdoor equipment and they develop satisfactory levels of hand-eye co-ordination. For example, cutting spasmodically with scissors, using glue sticks, felt tips and threading. Children are well behaved. They are beginning to understand the need for rules and are learning to share and take turns. Children are beginning to show an interest in living things and their surroundings through a variety of topics and are gaining an awareness of their own and other cultures. For example, children plant seeds and watch them grow, they look at the insects that they find through the viewing boxes and a selection of different sized magnifying glasses. They are developing some understanding of other cultures and the world around them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed into the playgroup and good relationships are beginning to form between the children and staff. Children learn about the wider world as topics are planned on people in the community and countries around the world. Children join in with the celebration of different festivals. For example, during Chinese New Year they dressed in traditional costumes,

ate food with chopsticks and looked at Chinese letters and words. Staff demonstrate an awareness to include and identify the needs of all individual children who attend the setting.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from the two-way sharing of information about their needs and daily routines. There is a parents noticeboard with information displayed and all parents receive a copy of the playgroup's booklet which contains sufficient information on policies and procedures and the contact details and information regarding the regulator. Although children's assessment records can be viewed by parents at any time, this is not a formal arrangement. Consequently, parents do not regularly access their child's assessment records. Parents receive a written report at the end of year about how their child is progressing. Continuity of care for the children is promoted as the group operate an open door policy. Information regarding the Foundation Stage is also included in the playgroup booklet. Parents receive verbal information to enable them to continue their child's learning at home. For example, children can bring items into playgroup that are relevant to the themes they are doing. Parents are not fully involved in the initial assessment of their child within the Foundation Stage curriculum, this means there is no starting point for staff to build on children's existing skills. Parents speak very highly of the staff and the care their children receive.

Children are well behaved. The staff act as good role models and manage behaviour well, promoting children's self-esteem and confidence by giving appropriate and sincere praise and encouragement. Children respond well to the staff's calm and consistent approach and there is a strong emphasis on respect and consideration for others. The children relate well to each other, and happily share and take turns when playing games. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All children are settled and relaxed and staff work well together as a team to provide a warm and caring environment for children and their parents. The playgroup room is sufficiently organised to include continuous provision and, weather permitting, a free-flow approach to continual learning outdoors. Most toys and equipment can be accessed easily by the children. Children are able to move around confidently and independently, and they initiate their own play well. Most records, policies and procedures for the safe management of the playgroup are in place. However, the behaviour management policy does not contain sufficient details, not all staff's details are maintained on their records and the daily attendance register does not clearly identify the accurate times of children and staff's arrival and departure.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Children are cared for in a positive and supportive environment, which effectively promotes their social and moral development. Although staff's training and development needs are not fully identified, as annual appraisals and supervision procedures are still in the early stages of development and have not yet been implemented, the committee and the manager do encourage them to attend relevant training opportunities as they arise. However, staff's experience and knowledge of the Foundation Stage is not fully developed yet and the lack of a system in place to monitor and evaluate their practices results in missed opportunities to increase children's learning, and to continue making progress towards the early learning goals. Formal and informal staff meetings are ways of sharing good practice, planning and relevant information.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection an action was raised in relation to National Standard 1; suitable person. To ensure that Ofsted were informed about any changes to adults working on the premises. The playgroup have followed Ofsted's vetting procedure with all staff working with children. This further promotes children's safety. The playgroup was also asked to ensure that all policies and procedures were available to parents and that the registration certificate was displayed; to ensure there was a record of visitors; to review the written fire evacuation plan so that all staff were clear about their role and responsibilities and that fire drills were carried out and that these were recorded in a fire log and to review the special needs statement so that it included reference to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. The playgroup management and staff have reviewed all policies and procedures and have ensured that all relevant statements and information is available to parents. They also include the procedure for fire evacuations to be carried out termly with children and staff to raise their awareness of the procedure. The registration certificate is displayed in a prominent position. This further helps to promote children's safety, welfare and care within the setting.

Nursery Education.

At the previous nursery inspection the provider was asked to: establish a system of assessment so that children's learning is clearly monitored; to establish a system to ensure that assessments of children's learning inform future planning; to establish a system to ensure that all staff are aware of the desired learning outcomes for each activity (this system should ensure that the activity is monitored and evaluated in terms of it's impact on children's learning); to review the range of planned activities to ensure that children are sufficiently challenged and stimulated and to establish a system to ensure that issues raised at inspection are addressed. The playgroup have made some improvements regarding the nursery education provided. Monitoring and assessment of children's learning has slightly improved with documentation in place, however, these systems need to be further developed along with the monitoring and evaluation of activities to ensure the learning objectives have been met and inform future planning. Planning is improved and is based on the areas of learning, although this requires developing further to ensure all areas of learning are fully covered and children continue to be appropriately challenged.

Complaints since the last inspection

Concerns were raised in relation to National Standard 11, behaviour and National Standard 13, child protection. An unannounced visit was carried out to investigate these concerns on 28th April 2004. Following discussion with the supervisor of the group and members of the committee, observations of relevant documentation and the care practices demonstrated that the National Standards 11 and 13 were not being met and as a result, two actions were raised. A satisfactory response to these actions has been received, demonstrating that these standards continue to be met. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- ensure an appropriate first aid course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children is completed
- ensure the school grounds are secure when children are playing outdoors
- continue to develop younger children's development records clearly in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- ensure that there is a balance between adult led and child led activities
- ensure all staff details are maintained and that the daily attendance register accurately records the times of children and staff's arrival and departure
- continue to further develop all policies and procedures to ensure all relevant information is included.

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 staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, to ensure sufficient coverage across all areas of learning
- improve children's development records further by identifying how and when children have achieved the stepping stones in order to inform future planning, to help plan for the next steps in children's learning and to ensure that children are sufficiently challenged
- increase opportunities for children to extend and explore mark making and mathematical skills
- develop ways to involve parents and carers in their child's initial assessment and to keep them fully informed about their children's education.
- develop more robust systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching in helping children to progress.

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