

Thornton Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY271296
Inspection date	28 January 2008
Inspector	Carol-Anne Shaw
Setting Address	School Road, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire, FY5 5BJ
Telephone number	07792 784 687
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Registered person	Thornton Pre-School Playgroup Ltd
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 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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Thornton Pre-School Playgroup has been operating since 1966, it moved to its current premises in 2003. The group is a privately owned and managed provision. It is registered to provide sessional day care. It is situated in a purpose built nursery unit attached to Baines Endowed School in Thornton. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.00 to 11.45 and 12.45 to 15.30 term time only. They have access to an enclosed outdoor play area and at times the extended school playground.

There are currently 90 children from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 60 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and currently there are no children who speak English as an additional language attending.

The group employs eight staff, five have an appropriate level 3 early years qualification and two are working towards childcare qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children demonstrate a positive attitude to their health and well-being. The staff work to the clear policies and procedures in place which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. They provide the children with good guidance and support; children gain a good understanding of hygiene and become increasingly independent in their personal care. The older children are confident in accessing the facilities, they wash hands before snack time and after using the bathroom. Children develop their independence in personal care and are becoming aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Children have good opportunities to extend and develop their physical control in the well organised, daily indoor and outdoor experiences. This is supported by the staff having a very good awareness of child development. They encourage and support children to try out new skills, children are confident and are able to set their own limits within the safe environment. The older children are developing a positive attitude to physical exercise. They enjoy using the outdoor area with its changing challenges. Children use the outside area to support their learning, accessing a range of play activities. The poor weather has limited the access for the children. The group has secured planning for a canopy to be built so children can have access to outside play and fresh air every session.

Children have a good range of healthy snacks each session, they enjoy a choice of fruits at snack time. Children have a very good understanding of why they eat healthy foods and how it relates to their bodies. Effective liaison with parents ensures children's individual dietary needs are fully met and attention is paid to managing any cultural and medical needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are vigilant and use good risk assessment systems to reduce potential hazards. The children learn about protecting themselves. When playing outside the children play at crossing the road, going through the road safety code with the stop and go board.

Children access a wide range of good quality, safe and suitable toys, resources and equipment, all very appropriate to their age and stage of development. The equipment is suitably set out to enable children to make choices. However, in some instances the staff do too much for the children, limiting opportunities for children to self select. For example, some creative activities are set out for the children with all the required resources, limiting their available choices.

Children are very well protected by staff who have a good understanding of safeguarding children through the policies and procedures. All staff have attended training and are fully aware of their responsibilities relating to safeguarding children and give a high priority to children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children arrive happy and eager to participate, they part from their parents and happily say goodbye. The key staff work effectively, they know the children well and are sensitive to their individual needs. The close and caring relationships increase children's trust and help them develop confidence and build self-esteem. Early communication skills are well supported through good adult-child interactions. Children are beginning to make sense of the world and express their ideas through lots of different planned activities and free play that supports their learning. The group has continuous play for most of the session, however, this comes to a stop for the group snack time.

There is a positive bond and appropriate physical contact between the younger children and staff, this increases children's well-being and sense of self. There are opportunities for the children to express their ideas and be involved with a wide variety of activities and experiences. The children enjoy the many play activities and explore paints, textures, music and songs. The area for creative work sometimes limits children's individual freedom of expression. Overall, the provision provides the children with an environment which promotes development and good care.

The group progresses the development of the under threes in a systematic way. Assessments of progress are maintained, however, these have just been changed and are complicated and are not fully completed. The staff have attended training for the 'Birth to three matters' and work to this framework.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the principles of early years education and use the Foundation Stage to ensure all areas of children's learning are developed through play. They plan and provide effective and realistic challenges for most of the children. The activities are well organised and supported with relevant resources and equipment. The outside area is in the process of being improved to ensure all areas of the curriculum are covered each session. A good range of teaching methods are used, this ensures children learn across all areas of the curriculum. Children are motivated, confident, self-assured and keen to participate. This is promoted by the staff team's enthusiasm and interest in them. The children work well together and follow simple rules to support sharing and safety. The more able children assist others in accessing resources, helping with coats and boots, they tidy away the equipment and resources appropriately.

Children use their imagination in role play situations with lots of dressing up, for example, wearing 'clip clop' shoes, and playing at workmen wearing hard hats and high visibility jackets outside as they interact and play. They use their creative play to demonstrate their sense of the world around them. There are displays of children's work showing a variety of resources and methods used by them, such as collage and free painting. The work done to support the topic has covered many learning areas of the curriculum.

Children communicate and express themselves very well with each other, staff and visiting adults. Interaction is appropriate and the staff encourage children to share their experiences at circle time. Children develop their language and thinking skills as well as confidence and independence. They use resources for mark making in their play and learn to recognise letters through displays, labelling and books. Children gain confidence in their mathematical language.

They use numbers and solve simple problems in their every day activities, for example, when playing in the sand counting how many children can play there. They learn sequencing through patterns and observing the life cycle of the butterfly and frogs.

Physical skills are extended and supported with access to outside play opportunities, use of music and movement, access to instruments and ability to use a wide variety of tools and resources. Children explore and investigate their surroundings through a variety of activities, planting flowers and bulbs in the garden area near the front door. Children access resources to support their understanding of information technology; they are confident users of the computers.

The assessment of children's learning is done by a comprehensive and complicated system covering all aspects of learning, however, this is not kept up to date. This is done by the key workers who know the children and their individual needs very well. The range of activities provide appropriate support and challenges for the children overall. However, assessments are not used to their full effect to plan for the children's next steps in their learning. This could limit the challenge for all children to extend their skills. In practice the staff know the children well and progress children's learning; this is not made evident in the short term planning.

The planning for children with learning difficulties is effective and builds on what children know and can do.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. All children are made welcome, staff value children's individuality and respect parents' views and contribution to the care provided. Younger children's home routines are discussed and staff support these appropriately. The children's behaviour is good, the staff show a consistent and caring approach to managing behaviour. The older children follow simple rules and know the routines and boundaries in place. Children share and show respect for others, they take turns and show good manners, saying please and thank you. They learn to negotiate and take responsibility for their own behaviour. The older children support the younger children. As a result, children's spiritual moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children have good opportunities to learn about the world about them. Through topics and resources that promote diversity, their own and other cultures are supported.

Children with any learning difficulties are supported effectively, extra support staff and links with other professionals ensure they are fully integrated into all aspects of the group.

The partnership with parents and carers is good, contributing to children's well-being in the group. Systems are in place to ensure parents are kept informed of what the group provides to support their child's development and learning. The end of term report ensures parents know how their child is progressing in their learning. Children benefit from the involvement of parents in projects and topics at home, this contributes to their good health, development and learning. A wide range of story sacks are available for the children to take home and use with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The monitoring of the nursery education is done by the manager. It is linked to the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. This is done systematically and informs the future development plans for the provision. The outside has been highlighted for improvement by the group. The staff show enthusiasm and work effectively as a team to ensure the provision meets the needs of all the children who attend.

Children's care is enhanced by the efficient management of the setting. The good organisation of the playgroup provides a welcoming environment for children to play and learn. There is a wide range of very suitable policies and procedures in place to support the management of the group. Parents are informed of how their child is progressing in their development and learning. The premises in all areas are planned to support and promote children's development and learning. All families are supported and individual children's care needs are followed. The staff ratios ensure children have good support. This allows children to experience the many interesting and different activities throughout the session. The use of time, space and resources enhances children's learning in most areas. The group informs parents of the complaints procedure and documentation is organised and stored securely to maintain confidentiality.

Children benefit from the staff having a sound knowledge of how children learn. Detailed procedures are in place for induction and the ongoing training of staff. Staff have a commitment to improvement and personal development, this underpins the care and welfare of the children in the setting.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection there was a recommendation relating to documentation. The group has ensured that parents sign to acknowledge any entries in the accident records.

The recommendation has been completed, resulting in improved safety and the group better meeting the needs of the children in their care.

There has been no previous nursery education inspection for this registration.

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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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 opportunities in creative work allow children to develop their individual creativity
- continue to develop the continuous provision.

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):

- ensure that assessments of children's progress are kept updated and are used to inform the short term planning, showing the possible next steps in their learning
- continue to develop the outside environment to cover all areas of the curriculum.

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