

Town Street Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY292611
Inspection date	07 June 2007
Inspector	Linda Filewood
Setting Address	The Methodist Centre, Hawthorn Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS7 4PH
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Registered person	Deborah Margaret Calvert
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?

Town Street Playgroup is a privately-owned setting which operates from the Methodist Centre in the Chapel Allerton area of Leeds. A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time. The playgroup is open term time only and sessions are Tuesday to Friday from 09.15 until 11.45.

There are currently 30 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. The group serves the families from the local area.

The playgroup employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

The group receives support from the Pre-school Learning Alliance and an advisory teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Good hygiene procedures are in place which ensure that children play in a clean environment. They learn the importance of keeping healthy and use paper towels to minimise the risk of cross-infection. Older children are independent in their self-care and need no reminding to wash their hands before sitting down for their snack. Children are well cared for if they are ill whilst at the setting and parents are aware of when not to bring their children. A qualified first aider is on duty at all times, all accidents are accurately recorded and parents are informed.

Drinking water is readily available to the children throughout the session and staff ensure that children have sufficient to drink in warm weather. They enjoy fresh fruit and an occasional biscuit at snack time and older children help prepare the fruit by cutting it carefully into smaller pieces. The provider gathers information about the individual children's dietary needs when they start attending to ensure these are well catered for.

Children are helped to develop good physical control through stimulating, daily indoor experiences. No outdoor play area is available but the setting makes very good use of a large upstairs hall. This allows children the space to run and use larger play equipment, such as a play parachute. Children delight in the challenges offered to them through a wide range of activities, such as climbing the steps of the slide or jumping in sacks, which they tackle enthusiastically. They are offered plenty of resources and activities which develop their hand-eye coordination. For example, they sew, cut safely with scissors and roll out play dough. Older children show a good understanding of how to transport equipment safely at 'tidy up time'. Children have time to relax as well as be active during the session. They sit quietly for an appropriate length of time during 'circle time' and successfully work out how much space they need to sit comfortably.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe, secure indoor environment as staff are vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. The outside door is well monitored at arrival and departure times and visitors are asked to sign to show they are on the premises. Parents are asked to help in order to maintain good ratios when taking children on outings, contributing to the children's safety. The wide variety of resources and equipment, such as tables and chairs, are in good, clean condition and suitable for the ages of the children attending. Indoor space is organised skilfully and allows children to move freely from room to room accessing different areas of play. Children have easy access to resources, particularly to a plentiful supply of craft items, which they can reach safely.

Staff help children learn to keep themselves safe. For example, they remind them to hold onto the handrails when walking up and down stairs. Visitors to the setting and planned activities support children's learning of road, fire and personal safety. Staff carry out regular fire drills, which are well logged, raising the children's awareness of what to do in the event of an evacuation. However, although there is a wired in smoke alarm system upstairs, only a battery smoke alarm is in place downstairs and, as this is not always in full working order, the children are at risk should a fire start at this level.

Policies and procedures are in place to safeguard the children's welfare. Not all of these fully reflect the recent changes to the local procedures, however, or include the need to advise Ofsted of any incidents reported to Social Services. Staff clearly understand their role in caring for the children and have undertaken further training to improve their understanding of child protection issues. Parents are well advised of the procedures in place for the safe collection of their child and their care if they are not collected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children separate easily from their parents and carers on entry to the playgroup and quickly become engaged in their play. They happily make good use of all the areas of play offered to them in each room during their time in the setting. A very good, varied range of activities is planned for them which contributes well to their development in all areas. Children's interests are incorporated skilfully into the activities. For example, the water play is extended after a family visit to a local sea-life centre. Children are confident and chat happily to each other and the staff, who respond well to them. Staff skilfully encourage children to build on what they already know, raising their self-esteem. They ask open-ended questions, listening carefully to the children and appropriately offering meaningful praise. As a result, children learn in a comfortable and relaxed environment. Staff have a secure knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum and an excellent understanding of each child's stage of development

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning is very clear, evaluated to inform future planning and covers all areas of learning. There is a good balance of child-led and adult-led activities, which supports children's development. Staff offer children good encouragement so that they enjoy and experience all the play opportunities. Newly introduced assessment records show children progressing well through the early learning goals. Observations of the children's development are regularly undertaken by staff and used to plan for the next steps in their learning. However, as these do not always clearly show which stepping stone they relate to, it is unclear whether sufficient information is gained from the observations to show development in all six areas of learning.

Most children are confident speakers and talk happily about their family life and visits they have made. They work well together and enjoy sharing a computer program, for example, with a friend. Children often use the home corner and office area to realistically impersonate different characters in their lives. For instance, they stir a spaghetti dinner with a wooden spoon in the kitchen or talk on the telephone after typing a letter. Staff encourage children to be independent in their self-care and they are given time to try to put their shoes on before help is offered. Children respond well to instruction, such as making a line before going down the stairs, and listen carefully to the staff. All children listen to stories keenly at circle time and select and look at books independently. They are competent at using one-handed tools and equipment. For example, they sprinkle small glittery pieces onto their picture with ease and draw pictures of fish, and older children write their names clearly.

Children are developing good counting skills and staff use mathematical language well during activities and play. Older children are encouraged to use their mathematical skills to solve problems. For example, they calculate how many more children are allowed in the movement area by seeing how many empty shoe patterns are left on the entry mat. Children delight in

using their senses to explore objects and are encouraged to feel, smell and look at the patterns on the scales of a fish before drawing it. They enjoy using a wide variety of construction toys and build bridges using wooden blocks, before experimenting whether they are high enough for a toy car to go underneath. A good range of equipment helps children learn to use everyday technology and older children use a computer skilfully to follow simple programs. Visitors to the setting and parents sharing their skills enhance the children's understanding of the outside world and they enjoy, for example, the experience of listening to the sounds of musical instruments. All the children enjoy music and younger children often spontaneously sing as they roll out dough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The children have good opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, visitors to the playgroup and local outings. All children are warmly welcomed into the provision and staff work well with outside agencies and parents to ensure they provide an inclusive environment. Children play harmoniously together, are well behaved and respond well to consistent adult expectations of their behaviour. They are given good support in sharing and turn taking. For example, older children are encouraged to write their own names on the waiting list for the computer. Staff value children's individuality and display their artwork in the dedicated playgroup room to create a bright and colourful environment. Children are encouraged to become independent and responsible. They cut up fruit at snack time for others, for instance, and help tidy up the toys before story time.

The partnership with parents and carers is good, and contributes significantly to children's well-being in the playgroup. Parents have many opportunities to become involved in their child's day. They help on outings and join in during the session to share their skills, such as music or woodwork, with the children. They are clearly advised of the topics their children are covering so that they can contribute to their child's learning. Staff actively seek parents' views about their child's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting and about their care whilst at the setting. They ensure that all parents know how their child is progressing and developing through regular discussions and the children's individual profiles, which parents often add their own observations to. Parents report that they are very happy with the care and development their children are making.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff are effectively deployed and the indoor space is skilfully utilised to promote the children's feelings of security and well-being. The sessions are organised successfully so that children benefit from easily accessible resources, which cover all developmental areas, and familiar routines that they are comfortable with. The small established staff team know the children well and are fully aware of each child's capabilities, enabling them to give very good support in their development. All records, policies and procedures required for the efficient and safe management of the provision are in place, are very efficiently organised and reflect the practice of the provision.

Leadership and management are good. The proprietor is fully aware of her responsibilities, when recruiting new staff, to ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff who are

appropriately qualified. The commitment of the staff to enhancing their knowledge through further training has a positive impact on the children's welfare and development. However, an appraisal system is not in place to clearly identify these training needs. Staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities within the setting and are all involved in planning activities which take account of their individual interests. They regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of their care and education to ensure that children are making good progress in their development. 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 the provider was asked to ensure that all furniture used by the children was maintained in a clean condition. The provider has now purchased new tables and chairs that are used solely by the playgroup, and these are cleaned regularly. They were also asked to ensure that children had an appropriate range of activities and resources that promoted their awareness of ethnicity and disability. The range of resources has now been improved and activities, such as celebrating festivals that have meaning to the children, raise their awareness of diversity.

Since the last nursery education inspection the provider has addressed the issue of providing more opportunities for children to develop their independence, particularly at snack time. Children now are encouraged to pour their own drinks and help to cut up the fruit for their snack.

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 fire safety equipment, such as smoke alarms, is sufficient and maintained in good working order
- ensure the child protection policy reflects recent changes to the local procedures and includes the need to advise Ofsted of any incidents reported to Social Services

- develop a system for staff appraisals.

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 the assessment system to ensure observations are clearly related to the stepping stones, in order to provide sufficient information to show development in all six areas of learning.

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