

Chasewell Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	133597
Inspection date	29 June 2007
Inspector	Jill Milton
Setting Address	C/o Chasewell Community Centre, Avocet Way, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 9YA
Telephone number	01295 277834
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Registered person	Chasewell 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 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?

Chasewell Playgroup opened in 1973 and is managed by a committee of parents and carers. It operates from a community centre, which is situated in the grounds of The Grange Primary school on the edge of Banbury. The group has the use of the main hall and all the facilities and has an agreement with the neighbouring primary school to share its outdoor area at set times. Chasewell Playgroup serves the area of Banbury.

The group opens five days each week during school term times with sessions running from 09:00 to 11:30. A maximum of 32 children between the ages of two and five years may attend at any one time and there are currently 37 children on roll. Of these, 36 children are in receipt of nursery education funding. The group employs seven staff who work on a rota basis and over half of them have suitable early years qualifications. The group receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff prepare well in case they need to attend to any first aid emergencies at the playgroup. Training is up-to-date and regularly checked first aid supplies are to hand. Children's health is safeguarded since the staff liaise effectively with parents to find out about any special requirements such as dietary issues. Procedures to keep children healthy are firmly in place. The children play in a clean environment where the adults are diligent about maintaining good hygiene standards. Children learn about routines for hand washing and photographs help to remind them with visual clues of what to do.

The new arrangement for serving snacks is working very well. Small groups of children visit the snack table when they are ready for refreshment or as one child explains 'when you are peckish'. Children choose from healthy options such as cubes of cheese, fresh fruit or cucumber slices. They have access to drinks throughout the session to ensure they can quench their thirst. Staff encourage children's awareness of healthy lifestyles through topic work, for example, about growing or harvest time.

Children use the quiet book corner during the morning to rest if they need to. The area is comfortable and presents a cosy area to share a book with friends and a member of staff. Children can also choose to take part in energetic play using equipment in the indoor and outdoor areas. The climbing frame set up inside the hall is a popular feature and children demonstrate their growing confidence and explore ways of travelling up, over and through the equipment. Children are enthusiastic about outdoor play times in the school grounds. They use a wide range of small equipment to develop their skills such as throwing and balancing, though do not have access to very much large equipment. Staff engage with the children so that they can provide good support. A parachute game is a successful opportunity to work together as a group and enjoy active play in the fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean environment which is light, airy and at a comfortable temperature. The staff are efficient in setting out activities before the children arrive and sensible use of the large hall creates interesting areas for play. The children choose from a good range of resources presented within their reach. The playgroup owns many good quality resources and staff make sensible choices of new items such as music for group activities which match children's interests. Staff are starting to explore ways of making more resources accessible each day to further promote children's independence.

Children stay safe whilst they play since staff are vigilant about supervising them and monitoring the premises. There are an effective number of checks in place to ensure staff deal with any potential safety hazards. They ensure for example, buzzer alarms are working on doors or that all electrical sockets are covered. One of the daily tasks for the team of staff is to be a welcome person at the door and this ensures authorised adults cannot enter or children leave unsupervised. Children themselves are becoming involved in safety awareness as they sensibly line up to go outside or use the designated area with their scooters. The children take part in regular fire evacuation of the premises and staff maintain an accurate fire log of such events for future reference.

Children's welfare is important to the staff who have a good understanding of the area of child protection. Staff attend training to up-date their knowledge and they have robust procedures in place to ensure adults working in the setting are suitable to work with young children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy an active morning at playgroup where they find a stimulating range of activities to choose from. Children show a confident attitude when they arrive and they make straight for the book corner where the day starts with a short group time. Children who are less sure or who are just visiting feel secure since their parents receive encouragement to stay with them for a while. When children under three years attend the group the staff make good use of the Birth to three matters framework to support their work with this younger age range.

Children look together at colourful posters presenting them with many opportunities to engage in conversations. A 'chatter board' for example, displays interesting pictures and provides useful stimulation to talk. Children spend most of the morning in free play where they make their own decisions about what they would like to play. Staff deploy themselves effectively around the setting to ensure children receive good support to their care, learning and play.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff show an interest in the children's learning and are obviously at ease sitting in small groups with children and supporting them with questions and ideas. The children organise themselves into clusters around activities and many are showing co-operation with peers as they play. The children build a train track together for example, or play out scenes in the shop area. Children behave well and respond to staff guidance.

Children talk frequently during the day and they especially like to visit the book corner. Staff are only too willing to share story books with the children and the interesting range of good quality books tempts the children to look. They demonstrate their awareness of how to turn pages correctly and they see many words around the setting next to pictures to help them make early connections with the uses of print. Most children recognise their own names. Some are also starting to write their names though this is sometimes not sufficiently encouraged and children can lack clear examples of the letters to follow. Children have daily access to good quality resources to support early mathematics. They explore balance, sorting, counting and number recognition. They are learning how useful numbers are in practical ways, working out for themselves how many can be at one activity or what the prices are in the shop.

Children are using tools like scissors with growing skill and they have regular use of resources to support their understanding of technology. During a typical morning children have good opportunities to explore the natural world, handling for example, shells in the water tray or looking at a feather with a magnifying glass. An interesting display of 'treasure' invites the children to experience many natural textures. Children are progressing well with their skills of co-ordination as they build with construction toys and with staff support they follow a picture of a design they wish to make. Children are using their imaginations as they play with paint, collage and props to make up stories. Staff let them develop their own ideas and provide them with a wide range of opportunities to express themselves. Children enjoy their shared song times and plans indicate that music activities are part of the programme of activities.

Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and they are confident in planning a curriculum to support children's learning. The children are making good progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. The staff are not afraid to take on new ideas about planning and they learn from training courses they attend. Staff monitor children's progress effectively through a number of methods. They make attractive books during the time a child spends at the group with examples of early art work, photographs and comments. Staff make regular dated observations of what the children are able to do though are only just developing a way to include this in planning so children can be assisted in making the next step in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing a positive attitude to others as they settle into playgroup and learn to be part of a group. They are aware of the routine of the morning sessions and time lines showing photographs of the main events of the day help to reassure new children. There is a good relationship with the school staff and visits, talks and the learning of new songs help to prepare children for the next stage of their education. Children see many images in playgroup that promote a positive view of the wider world. They learn about festivals from a range of cultures through the year. Photograph albums encourage children to talk about past celebrations such as St Lucia day or Lewis Carroll's birthday. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered.

There are no children currently attending with learning difficulties or disabilities. The staff have effective arrangements in place to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They attend the latest training courses and have past experience of working with outside professionals to offer support to families. Children behave well at playgroup. The staff are calm and consistent in their management of children's behaviour. They have realistic expectations for the ages of the children attending and they have a number of effective strategies in place to encourage children to manage their own behaviour. For example, the children count laminated pictures next to an activity to self-manage how many can play at once. Outdoors the children accept that their turn on the scooter ends with the use of a sand timer. Children enjoy receiving kindness awards at the end of the day when the group recognises their good behaviour.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff use displays successfully to share information with parents and this includes details about the educational curriculum. Parents have access to many materials which illustrate how children learn whilst they play. There is also encouragement to share learning at home with ideas suggested on planning sheets or by taking home Kalahara the toy elephant to record his adventures. Parents speak of the approachable nature of the staff who talk to them about the children's progress. A successful open door policy results in parents staying to settle children or to come in and share their work skills with the group.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The team of staff work together effectively to make the playgroup sessions run well. They have clear guidance from senior members of the team about their roles and responsibilities and newcomers receive helpful advice. The mornings are well planned and backed by careful attention to detail, for example, by having risk assessment charts for staff to be sure they carry out safety

checks of the premises. Apart from some omissions the policies work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The organisation of the documentation to support the setting is neat and orderly. The leadership and management are good. The staff receive encouragement to attend training courses to further their skills and the leaders of the group provide good role models in their attitude to professional development. The staff act on advice from others and reflect on their day-to-day work in order to learn and develop ideas. The children benefit from this by having new activities to support their play and learning. The committee is actively involved in the running of the playgroup and the friendly rapport between staff and committee members demonstrates their good working partnership. The committee provide good backup support to staff with regard to recruitment, appraisals and business issues.

Improvements since the last inspection

Staff have attended to all the recommendations raised at the last care inspection. They ensure children are kept safe by now having a written procedure for action if a parent does not collect a child at the end of the session. Also with regard to safety the staff have improved their risk assessments of the premises to ensure they identify and reduce potential hazards to children. The possibility of cross infection by using shared towels has been removed since separate disposable paper towels are now in use throughout the playgroup. Lastly children now enjoy regular opportunities to go outdoors for energetic play through helpful negotiations with the adjacent primary school. This helps to promote healthy lifestyles to the children.

There were three key issues following the last inspection of the nursery education. The children now enjoy more opportunities to find out how things work through new equipment like a computer and displays of interesting objects. Their chances for participation in role play using a variety of props is better supported too. Photographs illustrate a good range of imaginary play opportunities. Children are starting to use their early mark-making when they play with scenes like a shop. When the occasion arises staff help children to learn some letter sounds, for example, the letter their name begins with. Although some weaknesses remain in extending writing there has been overall progress in communication, language and literacy since the last inspection. Lastly there have been some very good improvements in the sharing of information with parents. A delightful display of paperwork is now on view for families and regular newsletters and notices keep them informed of what is happening.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 policy documents are regularly updated so that they reflect latest changes and include all details outlined in the National Standards

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):

- implement the new ideas to link observations of children's achievements to planning to help children take the next steps in learning
- help children to move on with their writing skills and encourage them to name their own work more often

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