

Southery Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254267
Inspection date	05 July 2007
Inspector	Margaret Elizabeth Roberts
Setting Address	Westgate Street, Southery, Downham Market, Norfolk, PE38 0PA
Telephone number	01366 377069
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Registered person	Southery Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Southery Playgroup opened in 1972. It operates from one room, in an annexe adjacent to Southery Primary School, situated in the village of Southery, Norfolk. A maximum of 16 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.00 until 15.00 for 36 weeks of the year. All children share access to the school playground. There are currently 22 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these 17 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local catchment area. The playgroup employs three staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted because staff are aware of the importance of good hygiene practices which help to prevent the spread of infection. For example, tables and surfaces are

disinfected before the preparation and eating of snacks. Children are encouraged to learn the importance of personal hygiene through the daily routine. They wash their hands after going to the toilet and use wipes for the cleaning of hands before eating, disposing of them appropriately in the rubbish bin. Children do not always understand the reason that the washing of hands is important to their health, because staff do not tell them that it is to get rid of the germs. Children's medical needs are met well because staff have been trained in first aid and hold current first aid certificates. All relevant documentation is in place for the recording of accidents or medication giving and children can be cared for should an emergency arise because parents have given permission for any emergency treatment that may be required.

Children enjoy a social occasion at meal-times, where they sit together with members of staff. Parents provide packed lunches, for their children and the staff prepare fresh fruit for snack times. Children pour their own drinks, which promotes their independence but do not help in the preparation of snacks. Fresh drinking water is presented, but is not accessible to children, therefore children may go thirsty, as staff do not remind them of the importance of drinking regularly. Children's dietary requirements or allergies are recorded on their personal detail forms to ensure that they are offered an appropriate diet.

Children's small motor skills are promoted exceptionally well through the use of small equipment and tools. They are able to use scissors with accuracy and precision, cutting around shapes, such as the toothpaste tube and toothbrush, because they learn how to keep their teeth and gums healthy through visits from the local dental nurse. Their eye-hand coordination skills are very good, they balance blocks in tall towers, with increasing control and thread laces through cotton reels. They show an awareness of space when preparing for musical movement, by ensuring that they have enough room to move around. Children's large physical skills are inhibited through a lack of regular, daily outdoor play. They have little opportunity to run around freely or learn about changes in their bodies after they have been active. Children are able to move around indoors with control, avoiding obstacles such as chairs and tables.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enter premises that are welcoming and suitable for their purpose. Children's work is displayed throughout the room, giving them a real sense of belonging. They are able to move safely between activities, because thought has gone into the positioning of different play areas, in a room that is difficult to organise, because of its shape. Children are able to play on the floor or relax on the soft play equipment that has been set up as a settee. Children are able to use the school playground for outdoor play, which is adjacent to the setting's building. It is completely fenced and gated ensuring their safety at all times. Children are supervised when going to the toilet as they have to use the school facilities, which are in the main building, across the playground.

The provision of a good range of safe and well-maintained equipment and toys helps to meet the varying needs of all the children attending. Low storage cabinets with see through boxes, which contain an excellent variety of activities and play opportunities, helps to create an accessible and stimulating environment for children. They are appropriate for their purpose, ensuring that children's development and learning is promoted to a high standard. Children are able to use furniture competently because it is child size and safe, sufficient in quantity to allow groups of children to play and eat together.

Children play safely because staff have taken reasonable steps to ensure that hazards on the premises, both inside and outside, are minimised. Risk assessments are taken and the robust systems in place for managing access to the premises promotes the safety of children. The very good security measures that are in place and the constant supervision of children, by staff, ensures that they are not able to leave the premises unsupervised. Children can be protected in an emergency because there are clearly defined procedures for the evacuation of the building. Fire fighting equipment is available and children learn about personal safety by taking part in regular fire drills. The clear operational procedures for the safe conduct of any outings provided, further promotes the safety of children.

Children can be protected should abuse or neglect be suspected because staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children. Staff are able to recognise signs and symptoms of possible abuse and have the necessary guidelines to follow, should they need to report concerns. The setting's policy includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time spent at the setting, where their development is promoted effectively because they take part in a wide range of activities. They enter the premises happily, separating from parents with ease, making decisions about their play and learning, through self selection. Children are confident and often initiate their own play, by asking staff if they can do an activity that they would like to take part in. For example, children wished to do some junk modelling that had not been planned. They helped staff to find the different types of materials and waited patiently while glue was poured into pots for them to make their own designs. Children have extremely positive relationships with staff, who are very friendly and easy going. Children respect the staff because they, themselves, are valued and supported well in their play and learning. Children are made to feel secure within the setting because they are fully aware of the routines of the day. Their independence is encouraged through helping to tidy up the toys, putting away activities before they take part in something else. Children's self-esteem is promoted well, by staff who praise them at many opportunities and by admiring their work. One child, was extremely proud of his painting of a rainbow and was heard to say, 'Isn't it beautiful.' It certainly was and staff carefully put it to dry so that it could be taken home later.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff understand children's needs and provide a wide range of activities and experiences. They have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a clear understanding of how children learn, through practical activities. Good use is made of resources and simple open-ended questioning encourages children to think for themselves. Planning is shared by all staff and provides a broad balanced curriculum, which helps children to progress towards the early learning goals. The interesting and welcoming environment reflects their different backgrounds and much emphasis is put into introducing children to the wider community. For example, visits are taken to the Post Office and library, with visits made to the setting by the dental nurse, which helps children become aware of the importance of looking after themselves. Assessments of children's progress are clear, taking into account what the child already knows and understands. Staff record how children have approached learning, for example, with enjoyment and the information gained is used to help children move to the next stage in their learning.

Children are interested in what they do, sustaining interest in self-chosen and adult led activities. They are able to share and take turns, working well together as part of a group or individually. They are well behaved and respond positively to staff when asked to help, or get ready for snack and meal times. Children communicate well, they speak clearly and are able to listen to others. They are beginning to recognise letters and are able to copy words. However, limited access to mark making materials in role play situations, such as the home corner, inhibits their progression in writing skills. Children are able to count up to 12 and beyond, using number in everyday situations, such as counting how many children are attending and the cups at snack time. They are beginning to do simple calculation when singing rhymes, such as 'How many speckled frogs'.

Children's progress in knowledge and understanding of the world is very good. They are able to build and construct with a wide range of objects, such as building blocks and connecting games. They use the computer with confidence, competently moving the 'mouse' with precision and accuracy. They talk about what has been happening to them outside the setting and look forward to the visits from and to outside agencies, that help them to learn about the world around us. They learn about cultures and beliefs through planned topics, displays of their own work reflect our diversity. Children are able to use their imagination in role-play, where they often play their own games. They express themselves freely when painting at the easel and enjoy taking part in musical movement.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about equality through their play where they have access to a full range of activities which reflect our diverse culture. Children are valued by staff who make them feel good about themselves through appropriate praise. All children are treated with equal concern and there is no obvious stereotyping. Children's individual needs are met through consultation with their parents about their backgrounds, likes and dislikes. A key worker system, where staff are responsible for different children, ensures that parents are able to discuss any concerns with the named person looking after their child.

Children who may have special needs can be cared for because staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of every child in their care. Children are able to take part in activities at a level appropriate to their needs, their welfare and development is promoted within the setting because staff work in partnership with their parents.

Children behave extremely well because they know what is expected of them. This is because staff adopt a consistent and positive approach to the management of their behaviour. Children follow the good role model of staff, who are kind and polite, ensuring that children are aware of the setting's routines. Good behaviour is encouraged through praise and reward such as brightly coloured sticker's for children who have been helpful or kind. Should any behaviour become disruptive, children are helped to understand why it is unacceptable, by being given explanations, by staff, who respect their level of understanding and maturity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They receive good quality information about the setting, which includes the educational programme. Parents are invited to form the management committee to encourage their involvement in their children's learning and development. Parents have access to their children's records, they are invited into the setting on an informal basis at any time to discuss their child's progress. Children's learning is enhanced through open mornings

where parents are invited to join with their children in their play, where their progress can be discussed further. Regular, well produced news letters, attractive wall displays and examples of children's work provides parents with information about what activities are provided for their children and any future topics or events. Parents are made aware of how they can make a complaint, should they wish to do so, through the setting's policy and a poster that is displayed. However, the complaints policy needs to be amended to include the regulatory body's correct address and contact details. The setting is aware that a complaints log needs to be kept, but have not yet set one in place as they have never had a complaint made against them. Parents comment on how happy they are with the setting, that they are kept well informed and staff are very approachable, giving them the opportunity to discuss any concerns that parents may have about their individual children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare and learning is promoted because the organisation of the setting is effective and staff have appropriate skills, experience and qualifications. There are sound induction procedures in place and staff are appropriately vetted, ensuring that children are cared for by persons suitable to do so. High staff ratios, with good use of space and resources helps to meet children's individual needs.

All relevant documentation is in place and the setting has a working set of policies and procedures, which underpins the successful management of the setting and has a positive impact on the care children receive. A well kept registration system, recording times of arrival and departure, staff and visitor's attendance, ensures that children and adults can be accounted for at all times.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The committee and staff work extremely well together as a team and know their roles and responsibilities. Children's progress is monitored and evaluated effectively by the staff to ensure that the provision for nursery education continues to be improved. Staff are committed to the nursery and promote an inclusive environment, in which every child matters. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to: obtain, complete and return the relevant DC2 forms from Ofsted for all existing staff and main committee members; consider ways to encourage children's independence at snack time; Review and amend policies, paying particular attention to staff recruitment and the recording of parents' names on children's registration forms.

At the last Nursery education inspection the setting was asked to: increase children's awareness of the sound of words and letters, particularly through music and rhyme; improve the use of number, children's understanding of calculation and access to IT; develop the partnership with parents, by providing opportunities for them to share, on a regular and formal basis, their children's progress towards the early learning goals.

The setting has made improvements. Children's safety has been improved because all relevant forms have been completed by staff and committee members, ensuring that persons working with children are suitable to do so. Children's independence is being promoted at snack time as they pour their own drinks. However, this could be further extended by allowing children to

help with the preparation of snacks. Children's welfare is further promoted through policies being reviewed and amended.

Children's learning has been further enhanced through the improvement staff have made to the educational programme. Children now have opportunity to increase their awareness of the sound of words and letters, through music and rhyme. They regularly use number in everyday situations and use IT equipment competently. The partnership with parents has been improved through the regular sharing of their children's progress, which has a positive impact on children's learning.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- improve the availability of fresh drinking water
- ensure the details in the complaints procedure are accurate and set up a complaints log.

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 children's large physical skills are promoted on a daily basis
- promote children's mark making skills by encouraging free expression and providing writing materials in role play situations.

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