

Parson Drove Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221861
Inspection date	04 October 2007
Inspector	Sandra Hornsby
Setting Address	Payne Primary School, Main Road, Parson Drove, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE13 4JA
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Registered person	Parson Drove 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?

Parsons Drove Pre-School has been operating for many years. It operates from a mobile building located in the grounds of Payne Primary School. The group serves the local community and surrounding villages.

There are currently 10 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these eight children receive funding for Nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and would support children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 08:50 until 11:20. The pre-school employs two full-time and two part-time members of staff. All staff are qualified and hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean and hygienic environment where good routines and practices help children understand about their personal care and hygiene. For example, staff and children talk about the importance of hand washing and not sharing food, and together carry out procedures, such as washing the tables before snacks. Staff are first aid trained and have undergone special training to care for specific health needs of children attending the pre-school. This means that all children will receive the most appropriate care if they have accidents or have specific health requirements.

The staff have access to relevant information from parents about their children's health, and parents have given their permission to enable staff to seek medical advice or care in an emergency. There are effective procedures in place for the recording of accidents and administration of medication. This ensures children receive the appropriate treatment, it safeguards their well-being and ensures continuity of care between home and pre-school.

Children's individual health and dietary needs are clearly recorded and respected by staff, this ensures children receive an appropriate range of snacks to meet their needs. Simple snacks are offered and are prepared by staff, for example, bread sticks, cucumber and apple. Snack times are social occasions and children sit together and chat with staff. They are offered opportunities to serve themselves water or milk and butter their crackers. This means their independence and skills of pouring and using cutlery safely is being promoted.

Children have outdoor play opportunities on most days where they can use sit-and-ride toys, bikes and push buggies and prams around the garden. However there is limited space in the garden for exploration on bikes and to run about and take on new and interesting challenges. For example, to go faster, go in a long straight line, steer between cones, and run about. They have access to a trim-trail, and use of the school playground for larger bikes and tractors, but these are used on a less regular basis. So children are not given consistent opportunities to develop and practise skills and gain confidence in balance and co-ordination and large physical movements. Children do have fresh air and general exercise and enjoy their outside play, however, the planning for larger physical play and exploration of children's all round larger physical development is basic and dependent on weather. Children use small tools and equipment, for example, the computer mouse, keyboard and dough tools to support the development of their smaller fine movements and co-ordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a bright, welcoming environment where they have access to a balanced range of safe and age appropriate resources. Children benefit from the organisation of the playroom because it allows children to make decisions about what they do and engage in things that interest them. In the outside play area children play with equipment that has been adapted to promote independence, but also keep them safe, for example children use bikes with stabilisers.

Procedures implemented by staff, for example, health and hygiene policy, a lost children's procedure, and risk assessments ensure children's safety on and off the premises, and staff are vigilant at reducing risks and minimizing hazards. For example an emergency box is carried in

the garden which includes a mobile phone, gloves and accident record and collection of children's book. This ensures incidents are dealt with promptly and efficiently, safeguarding children. Staff are aware of who is in the building as a visitors book is completed, furthermore there are effective procedures for the safe arrival and departure of children. Good staff deployment guarantees that children are well supervised, and their welfare is fully safeguarded.

Staff understand they have a duty to protect and safeguard children, and have satisfactory knowledge and understanding about child protection issues. Although there are procedures in place the document is not clear and does not fully meet the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. This hinders children and families receiving swift and necessary support.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children play comfortably in a well equipped and welcoming environment. Staff understand the needs of the children and focus initially on settling the children into the setting. Plans and activities are offered to help the children feel safe and secure, for example, 'our families' project. A well resourced home corner allows the children to reflect through play their home experiences, and use things that are familiar to them. Children confidently select resources and make their own decisions about what they do. Younger children are monitored by staff who support them through the more difficult tasks, which helps children to develop new skills and confidence to try new things. Staff sit with children and play alongside them offering lots of praise and encouragement, consequently their emotional well-being is supported.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good early progress through the stepping stones in the six areas of learning. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn. Children are challenged according to their level of understanding and their learning is supported to help them make good progress. Observations done on the children help to identify where children are at in relation to the stepping stones, and planning takes into consideration children's needs. Most of the six areas of learning are well planned, and individual activities and focused activities allow the staff to observe children, address additional needs and concentrate on children's next steps. However planning is inconsistent with consideration to physical development, which lacks a full curriculum for children's larger movements, and indoor physical play. Staff identify their areas of weakness and draw on other people for their expertise, for example, music sessions which children enjoy very much. This enables the group to offer children interesting learning experiences. Staff create an interesting environment where children are praised and encouraged, supporting their confidence and self-esteem. Staff ask questions and give children time to work out the answer.

Children happily play alongside each other while others are beginning to form relationships with their peers and play in a co-operative way, they understanding about turn taking and sharing. Two children enthusiastically talk about a train picture and making a railway, both children are enthusiastic about their plans and chat until the activity has to stop, this opportunity is helping children to develop friendships and co-operative behaviour. The younger children sit at self-chosen tasks for a short while, but move on to other activities. While others show greater concentration and an ability to sit for a longer time during activities, for example, in the home corner snack time and the music session.

Children speak clearly and can make themselves understood, for the younger children staff use simple language and focus on reinforcing what language children already have. Children experience opportunities to talk and listen to staff and other children during activities and snack time. This is where children are learning about listening to others and taking turns to talk. Some children talk more confidently than others, but all children are involved in conversations instigated by staff. During activities children are introduced to new words, for example, conductor, and beaters. This helps children to extend and develop their vocabulary. Some children can write some recognisable letters, and these are displayed on pictures done by the children. Name labels are handed out to children at snack time, but no use is made of them, and children are not using them to identify their name sounds or letters. There are fewer opportunities to explore mark-making and early writing skills in everyday play. A writing area is available, but does not take into account writing for different occasions, and for different purposes.

Children are given opportunities in this early term to consolidate their existing knowledge about mathematics and mathematic concepts, which helps them to develop confidence with numbers. Children participate in number rhymes, and within everyday play freely count from one to five, they count confidently. Children are starting to use simple calculations, for example, when handing breadsticks out at snack time, children are asked 'have we got enough'? and during music and singing time they sing about 'five little speckled frogs and five little ducks'. Children will progress onto more complicated problem solving, measuring and weighing in activities over the coming months such as in cooking activities.

Children are confident in use of the computer and easily move the mouse and touch the keys to produce a result. They use a range of small construction equipment, and tools in their play to help them make models and construct things, for example a train track. Children are learning about their local environment through visits to the local village, where they take photographs and meet people. Visitors come into the pre-school and meet the children and lead activity sessions, for example music sessions. Children are beginning to develop knowledge and understanding of their locality, different cultures and beliefs through planned topics and activities within the environment. Displays and project on 'our home and families' help children to develop an awareness that families are different. Children are able to draw on their own experiences and events in their lives and talk about them and use them in their creative play, for example, dressing up to go to a wedding. Children enjoy talking about past events and their own experiences. However, children are offered limited opportunities to explore and investigate natural products and materials that use children's senses, for example textures and smell.

Children are given lots of different opportunities to develop their creative skills and respond to how they feel and what they like through their play. They all enjoy the music session where they co-operate, respond and join in enthusiastically. They play musical instruments, and experience what sounds, tones and pitches they can make, either by clapping or using the instruments. They sing songs and use props in 'five little ducks went swimming one day', and enjoy the participation and handling of the props. Children use their imagination in the home corner and express what they know confidently. Children act out scenarios and use dressing up clothes to express their ideas and involve other children and staff in their play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the staff team who are committed and caring. They understand the children's needs and treat them as individuals because relevant information about the children

is kept up-to-date. Young children's needs are sensitively addressed by having a settling-in process that meets the children's needs. Parents can stay with children to help them settle into the pre-school and activities are offered that relate to things young children are familiar with, such as their home and the home corner play. These help younger children to feel secure and settle quickly into nursery life. Children have access to a wide and varied array of resources, activities and displays which promotes their knowledge and understanding about their local community and village and that of diversity.

There are good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pre-school has close links with the local authority co-ordinator who works with the setting and parents in monitoring and evaluating children's additional needs. Staff attend training to support their work, this means children receive the best and most appropriate care to support their development and welfare. Staff have undertaken additional training and have information and detailed care plans to support children who have specific care needs. Parents explain how reassured they feel leaving their children in the care of the staff. Consequently the staff team work closely with the parents and outside agencies to ensure the children's needs are planned for and met well.

Children behave well, most understand about sharing and turn-taking and practise these skills in their play. Some children are just beginning to learn co-operative play skills, but they are helped and supported by patient and caring staff who spend time with the children explaining and talking to them, and helping them to resolve conflicts. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers for nursery education is satisfactory. This contributes to the well-being of the children including those receiving nursery funding. Parents are happy with setting and have confidence in the staff caring for their children. This is supported by parents taking part in some of the children's learning, for example, staff suggest activities for children to do at home linked to the topics. Staff share information with parents on a daily basis, and there is continuity of care between home and pre-school as a diary is completed by staff. Parents have initial basic information about the Foundation Stage curriculum at the beginning of the term in the prospectus, other information, such as children's progress, is offered verbally at parents meetings.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There is a committed and caring staff team who provide an effective and well organised provision. Staff offer children support, flexibility and a safe and secure environment in which to play. The environment is organised to allow children choices and to enable them to make decisions about their play. They are well supervised by staff, who have undergone training to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date, and staff have a good knowledge of the children in their care. Most policies and procedures are in place and kept up-to-date, however the child protection, complaints and recruitment procedures do not fully reflect the current practice of the group.

Leadership and management are good. The staff team, leader and committee work well together. They have identified roles and support each other. The leader has good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and has systems in place to monitor the quality of nursery education, and how children are progressing. For example, she supports the staff team through observation, discussion and supervision and looks at the way children are progressing. The staff

attend regular training to support their ongoing work with the children. This knowledge and information is then used to effect future planning and ensure staff are able to help children progress. The leader is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and is working hard to improve the quality of care. She is pro-active in involving outside agencies, local authority and private companies to meet their needs in continuing to support children's learning and development. Consequently children's care and learning is enhanced by good leadership and management.

Overall the setting meets the needs for the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were made to which the provider agreed. To develop staff's understanding of health and safety practices and, to ensure the complaints procedure was available to parents and include all the relevant details.

Staff attend training and are given up-to-date policies to read if there have been any changes to health and safety practices. Staff have a duty and obligation to read policies and ensure they are aware of any changes. Issues relating to health and safety are discussed at team meetings.

The complaints log include relevant information about regulations put into practise in October 2005. It is available to parents, but there have not been any complaints to date. However the address details are not up-to-date and need reviewing. A further recommendation has been made.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection 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

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 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):

- update complaints procedure to include the correct address and recruitment procedure to reflect current practice

- ensure the child protection procedure is in line with the Local Safeguarding Board procedures.

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 children are offered regular physical play opportunities, indoors and out to develop their all round large physical movements and skills
- ensure children have opportunities to explore mark-making and develop early writing skills in everyday play opportunities
- offer children opportunities to use their senses, and provide natural resources and materials for children to explore and investigate (also applies to care).

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