

Painswick Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101673
Inspection date	27 June 2007
Inspector	Linda Janet Witts
Setting Address	c/o The Croft School, Churchill Way,Painswick,, Glos, GL6 6RQ
Telephone number	01452 813316
E-mail	
Registered person	Painswick 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Painswick Playgroup opened in 1990 and is run by a voluntary management committee. It operates from a self-contained building within the grounds of The Croft School, surrounded by over four acres of grounds. It is located in the small town of Painswick near Stroud in Gloucestershire. The indoor accommodation comprises of a large play room, kitchen, cloakroom and toilet facilities. The playgroup has a secure outside grassed area, with a climbing structure and also has the use of the school playground and grounds.

The playgroup is open Monday to Friday, 09.00 to 12.00. It is registered to accept up to 24 children. Children are accepted from the age of two years nine months to five years. There are currently 38 children on roll, of whom there are 32 funded three and four-year-olds. The group welcomes children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Children who attend live mainly within Painswick or surrounding villages.

A team of five staff are employed; they all hold early years qualifications, at level two or three. Parents of the children who attend also help out at the playgroup on a rota basis.

The playgroup is a member of the local Parent and Toddler Association and receives teacher support from Gloucestershire's Early Years and Childcare Service.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is actively promoted. Children play in a clean well-maintained environment where staff take positive steps to keep the premises clean. They ensure safe handling of food and help children to understand that washing their hands before eating, helps to keep them healthy. Children are shown, with actions, how to ensure that hands are washed thoroughly with soap, rinsed and dried. They learn about germs and how they can make them ill. Children who become unwell or injure themselves are cared for sensitively. Staff are trained in administering first aid and records of accidents are appropriately maintained. Parents receive written information about the group's sickness policy and about infectious illnesses; appropriate permissions and records are in place regarding the administration of medication to children. Children can rest, as they wish in the cushioned book area.

Children are provided with nutritious, healthy snacks. For example, they enjoy a selection of fruit, vegetables, cheesy biscuits and toast. A choice of milk or water is also offered. In the summer term children bring in lunch from home and gain independence in serving themselves, in preparation for school. Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions when children and adults sit together to enjoy their food and each other's company.

Children get plenty of physical exercise. Outdoor play opportunities are planned daily but the outdoor facilities are not used to their full potential. Indoors children move around the play space between activities and show respect for children's personal space as they engage in large group activities, such as, story-time and movement to music activities. Outdoors children can use the playgroup's climbing structure and physical play equipment. They run freely in the playground area and use wheeled vehicles confidently. They pedal tricycles and bicycles with stabilisers with control, changing direction to avoid obstacles and experimenting by pedalling backwards. They show balance and control as they propel scooters at speed. Dancing and movement activities are enjoyed by the children who join in with gusto. For example, they clap their hands and swing their arms, in time with the music on an exercise tape. They listen and follow the instructions for actions to accompany songs such as 'beanbag rock', smiling as they move with vigour.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is promoted well. They are secure and supervised well by the vigilant staff. Risk assessment is undertaken and risks identified minimised. For example, due to a highly publicised abduction case, parental concern regarding use of the playgroup garden area is acknowledged and further steps to improve the already secure area are planned. All visitors are asked to sign a record of their attendance and children are not left unsupervised with anyone who is not appropriately vetted. The environment in which children play is safe and areas where children need to be accompanied are protected by security measures, to prevent children's free access. Children learn to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn to use and carry scissors safely. Visits from road safety, fire and police officers also help children to

learn about safety. Regular fire drills are undertaken. This helps to familiarise children with emergency evacuation procedures.

Children use safe and suitable toys and equipment that stimulate them. Resources are of good quality and stored in low storage units to enable children to be involved in the selection of activities. They are also actively involved in tidying away resources after use to maintain a safe play environment. Equipment is regularly checked to ensure it is in a good state of repair.

Staff are trained in child protection, to ensure that they are aware of possible signs of abuse or neglect and appropriate action to take if they have concerns about a child's welfare. The group has a child protection policy to safeguard children and this includes a suitable strategy to deal with any allegations against a member of staff or volunteer.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages enjoy their time at the playgroup. They arrive with enthusiasm, detaching from their carer with confidence. They are relaxed in the company of the staff and parent helpers. Children are familiar with the routine and happily join in group activities such as circle-time, snack-time and story-time. Children are able to choose a variety of resources, initiating their own choice of activity, and also engage in adult-led activities. Activities are adapted for younger children to ensure their participation and enjoyment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Children benefit from the staff team's childcare experience and sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage of learning. Children are making satisfactory progress across all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Their progress in mathematical development is good and also children do well in many aspects of physical, creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's progress in some aspects of communication, language and literacy is weaker. The learning environment is attractive. Children can see print used for a variety of purposes, posters of interest and photographs of themselves at play. An enjoyable range of worthwhile activities is offered at each session and children are able to enjoy regular outdoor play opportunities. However, the garden area, is not used to its full potential, as an integral part of the learning environment, to benefit those children who learn best outdoors. Staff instinctively ask questions to promote children's language and thinking and introduce mathematical ideas through practical activities.

Staff make observations of children but do not always evaluate them in relation to children's learning. There is a reliance upon staff's mental knowledge of children's abilities, used to inform future planning. Plans cover all six areas of learning but do not give sufficient attention to the areas where children's progress is weaker. Although the activities are enjoyed by all children they are not always sufficiently challenging for more able children. For those children who have learning difficulties or disabilities, outside support is sourced and good liaison between children's parents established. However, staff fail to fully support these children to encourage communication and by adapting activities in response to their abilities, interests and learning styles. Support for children with English as an additional language is satisfactory. All children learn about the wider world and are introduced to different languages. The environment does not, however, reflect the home language and culture of all those attending. Children's assessment records contain observations, samples of work and photographs. A summative report is prepared

as children prepare to transfer into school. This is shared with parents and the children's new schools. The observations and examples of work and photographs, however, are not annotated to identify learning in relation to developmental stepping stones.

Children's transition into school is supported well by the playgroup. The Foundation Stage teacher from the host school is a regular visitor to the group. Teachers from the other local schools that children will move to also meet the children in the playgroup setting prior to transfer.

Most children are developing confident communication skills. Many are happy to talk in large and small groups, to both familiar and unfamiliar adults. At circle-time children are greeted and they in turn greet the staff. At 'show and tell' time, children bring things from home to talk about and they also share their news and many are keen to talk about their families and experiences. Those that find speaking difficult are not always able to join in such activities fully, or make their needs known. Other aids, such as, sign language or picture cards are not used.

Three and four-year-olds join in and show their enjoyment of stories read by adults. They enthusiastically join in the acting out of stories such as 'Three Little Pigs', using puppets and giggle as the adult puts on a variety of voices to animate the puppets she is using. The book area is comfortable and children will often look at books for themselves. Children recognise their first names and some recognise the names of others. More able children are not encouraged to recognise their surname as well. Some signs are written in different languages but are not necessarily reflective of children's home languages. Children are beginning to link sounds to letters. They draw, gaining control when using writing implements. Many can hold a pencil correctly and make marks such as lines and circles and give meaning to the marks made. Children can collect writing materials from the drawing table to use within their play, such as, writing notes during hospital play.

The young children are encouraged to show interest in counting. They routinely count the number of children present as a group and will count spontaneously as they go about their play. For example, a child counts the number of spots on his ladybird beanbag, as he prepares to join in an agility exercise. Many children can recognise numerals. Children are introduced to simple shapes and some can name them. Children use mathematical language, such as 'big' and 'small' and use mathematical ideas as they complete jigsaw puzzles and problem-solve.

Children learn about the wider world. They engage in a good range of activities as part of cultural and religious festivities. For example, they dress up in traditional costumes, taste traditional foods and undertake craft activities linked to the theme. They see positive images of culture and learn simple words of different languages. For example, they say 'good morning' and 'goodbye' in German. Artefacts within the home-corner and else where in the playgroup room, do not include those representative of different homelands. Children have good opportunities to explore the local natural environment. They also grow plants which they learn to care for. This enables them to observe seasonal and growth changes. Excursions into the community and visits to the group enable children to learn about the lives and work of others. For example, they visit the local fire station and are visited by the police and road safety officer. Children can ask questions, look at uniforms and equipment and enjoy the opportunity to investigate the inside of a police car and fire engine. Children are keen to use the group's computer. This tends to be under adult guidance and children are mostly shown how to operate it rather than manipulating the computer mouse for themselves and trying to complete simple computer programmes. It is difficult for children to operate the computer unless they are

standing. This is due to the height of the work station and lack of adult sized chairs. The children are able to build with a range of construction resources on small and large-scale.

Children safely use a range of tools and equipment, for example, using pencils with control, scissors, play dough cutters and rolling pins. They manipulate resources of different size and shape skilfully as they go about their play. Many can manage the fastening on their clothes. Others practise with adult support. Children also transfer resources between different areas of the playroom with care. Physical play activities give children the opportunity to practise a full range of physical skills. For example, they thread beads onto a lace and manipulate small objects; they learn to toss a pancake successfully, as they celebrate Shrove Tuesday, and join in actions to songs.

Children learn different painting techniques through planned activities. Displays of foot prints, animal masks, flower and caterpillar paintings and collage are prominently displayed. Children cannot freely choose to paint or create, as they wish, although there are plans to improve children's access to craft resources. Children actively use their imagination within their play. Children visit the home corner as part of role play based on their own first-hand experiences. They extend their imaginative play by taking resources from the home corner into other areas of the playgroup room. For example, children take dolls out in pushchairs and 'go shopping'. They dress-up and utilise resources as props. They often engage in role play as part of a large group. For example, during hospital play a large number of children play together and alongside one another. They take turns to be doctors and nurses and treat their adult patients. They apply sticker plasters and bandages and use their doctors' kits to deal with the 'injuries'. Such activity creates a buzz of excitement within the group. All involved become engrossed in their roles. Children also enjoy musical activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are very happy and settled within the group. They detach from their parents with confidence, quickly settling at chosen activities. They develop very good relationships with the staff and are relaxed in the company of adults and their peers. Children relate well to one another and link up with others as they wish during their play.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported by the abilities of staff to recognise difficulties and to seek professional advice, in partnership with children's parents. However, staff are less proactive in identifying simple ways that they can support children. For example, staff will re-direct children and try to include them in planned activities, but do not always take account of the children's interests or try different methods to aid children's non-verbal communication.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are encouraged to be independent in their personal care and activity choices and many persevere at activities for extended periods of time. Children learn good manners and are becoming familiar with the behavioural expectations within the group. Most are very well behaved, follow instruction well and are encouraged to share and take turns. Mature children show care and concern for younger children and will offer assistance to them without being asked.

Children are introduced to different cultures through well-planned activities. They are introduced to different languages and can see some positive images of different cultures, although these do not reflect the homeland and culture of all the children attending.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive good written information about the provision and regular newsletters to keep them up to date with news about the group. The parent information does not include a complaints procedure that fully reflects the group's responsibilities to investigate complaints, or details of the regulator. The group has not received any complaints, but has not developed a system to record complaints, should any be received. Good relationships are established with the children and their parents and two-way communication is promoted. Feedback is regularly sought from parents about all aspects of the provision and staff use such information to identify areas for improvement. Positive steps are taken to encourage parents to take an interest in their children's learning. They regularly undertake playgroup duties, and this enables them to gain an insight of how their children relate to others and also to learn about the planned curriculum. Parents are able to look at their children's progress records, as they wish. These do not clearly show parents the links between children's abilities and stages of learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The group leader has many years of experience at the playgroup. She fosters good team spirit. Staff hold either level two or three qualifications relevant to their roles. They are also trained in first aid and child protection.

Leadership and management of the playgroup are satisfactory. Systems are in place to ensure staff are appropriately qualified and cleared for work with children. An informal system of monitoring is used. Committee members are regular visitors to the group, with their own children and observe staff in practice. However, appraisals, to ensure ongoing suitability and to identify training to support individuals' personal development are not regularly undertaken. Children are protected from people who are not vetted. The committee is supportive of the staff. Meetings between staff and committee members are held regularly and ongoing fundraising enables staff to access training that they are interested in and also to extend the range of resources and ensure the upkeep of the playgroup building.

Staff use self-evaluation and parental feedback as a good means of assessing how well they promote positive outcomes for children. However, their system of monitoring the effectiveness of their curriculum is less effective.

There are strong links between the group and the school. Children benefit from opportunities to meet with the school reception teacher and staff share information routinely with the reception class teacher and head teacher. This aids children's smooth transition into school.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Staff work well together to plan interesting activities for children. Children play happily within the well-organised play space. The children can select activities from a suitable range of pre-planned and freely chosen activities. They have regular opportunities to play outdoors although freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor areas is restricted. Ratios of adults to children are good. This ensures the smooth running of each session and helps to ensure that children are appropriately supervised. The playgroup premise is welcoming to children, parents and visitors. There are colourful displays of children's work and photographs of the children at play. Children can see print used as labels and some positive images. The resources available are attractively stored and are of good quality. Trips into the local community and visitors invited to the group, enhance children's learning.

Staff maintain records confidentially. Attendance, accident and medication records are accurately recorded. All necessary information is gathered from parents to enable staff to meet individual children's needs and keep records of children's progress. The group does not have a system to record complaints, should any be received.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the playgroup was given a recommendation to produce a written risk assessment which includes identified risks within all areas used and those arising from activities. In connection with this it was also recommended that the group detail how these risks are minimised and ensure that the assessment is reviewed regularly. For the education aspect of the provision a point for consideration was made to make greater use of children's profiles as a means of showing children's progress over time, enabling parents to see children's progress clearly.

In response to these the playgroup has produced a written risk assessment covering the areas used by the group and risks arising from some activities. The committee representative and staff are aware of the need to treat this as a working document and to review it regularly. The children's profiles contain samples of work and photographs of children at play. These are now dated but there is no clear reference to indicate to parents how the contents reflect children's stages of learning and progress.

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 action 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 satisfactory.

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):

- develop a complaints procedure and system to record any parental complaints

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):

- make greater use of the outdoor area as part of one whole learning environment, together with the indoor area
- continue to develop the on-going assessment of children's development and progress. Analyse the observations made and use the information gathered more effectively, to ensure that children are challenged and supported appropriately, to enable them to move onto the next stage in their development

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