

# Weston Rhyn Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 224221  
**Inspection date** 14 May 2007  
**Inspector** Juliette Jennings

**Setting Address** The Family Centre, Weston Rhyn Primary School, Old Chirk Road, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7SR  
**Telephone number** 01691 774701  
**E-mail**  
**Registered person** Weston Rhyn 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](http://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?

Weston Rhyn Playgroup opened in 1979 and operates from one room in a purpose built building which is shared with the local authority nursery and the Sure Start facilities. It is situated in the grounds of the local primary school, in the village of Weston Rhyn, near Oswestry and serves the local area.

The setting is open each weekday from 12.20 to 14:50, term time only. There is also a lunch club facility prior to the start of the session, from 11:30 until 12:20. Children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 31 children aged from two years to under five years on roll, of these, six children are funded three and four year olds. The setting is able to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are four staff caring for children, all of whom 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's health is promoted well because staff follow agreed setting policies and procedures to support good hygiene. Areas used to prepare snacks are clean and well-maintained and staff have accessed food hygiene training. Children can independently wash their hands as they wish and are encouraged to develop their understanding of good hygiene through routine activities. Colourful posters and signs in the toileting area remind children to wash their hands regularly. In addition, children play with clean resources in a well-maintained environment because staff implement regular safety and cleanliness checks on toys and equipment. Procedures to further supplement this aspect are in place and fully implemented, for example, accident records are completed promptly and documentation for recording medication is available in line with requirements. Written permission is obtained from parents so that staff can act quickly if there is a medical emergency or an accident, although the wording in the consent restricts action to hospitalisation only and this could potentially place children's health at risk if other sources of medical treatment are not covered. All staff are trained in first aid techniques and the first aid equipment is readily available and checked regularly.

Children are encouraged to eat healthily because staff have been proactive in introducing positive ways of reinforcing healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle, with both parents and children. For example, the setting have recently completed the 'Health in Early Years' project, supported by the local authority and this has ensured that parents are much more informed about the types of food their children will benefit from. In addition, children now enjoy healthy snacks such as dates, apricots, cheese and crackers and a wide variety of fruit to go alongside their chosen drink of milk or water at snack time. Children are supported to independently pour their own drinks at snack time and have ready access to drinks of water throughout the session because staff provide a jug of water with cups at low-level.

Children have good opportunities for physical activity, fresh air and light within the routine of the session. Staff make good use of the outdoor space as a learning environment, using the nature area within the school to look at insects, for example, or using that same space for a 'bear hunt' activity to coincide with a favourite story. This allows them to take their learning outside and gives them good opportunities to enjoy the fresh air and outdoor space, although staff could make better use of the space as an extension to the activities provided inside for children.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are comfortable in the environment and enjoy a space which is stimulating and exciting, where staff work hard to ensure it is interesting and motivating. Children access a good range of toys, resources and equipment on a daily basis, which is in good condition and supports their learning. For example, the water play is readily available and continues to be used after an adult-led activity and other resources are located at low-level so that children can easily access these. The play area is colourful and interesting, with staff using the wall space for colourful displays as well as photographic facilities to celebrate children's work. The setting and routine is organised well to meet children's needs. There is a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities on offer and this helps to ensure that the children are focused and behave well.

Children's safety is supported because staff implement procedures to ensure that all areas are safe and secure. Supervision of children is consistently good, with excellent staff to child ratios in place and staff engaging well with children so that they remain interested and busy in the play space. Children's safety is further ensured because evacuation procedures are practiced regularly so that they would know what to do in an emergency. Detailed procedures are available for certain events, for example, in the case of an uncollected child or emergency situations such as a lost child. It was discussed that the latter procedure would be more thorough if it contained a timescale for a search and an outline of the area to be searched and the manager of the setting is currently reviewing this in light of our discussion.

Children's welfare is promoted because staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and know what to do if they have concerns about any children. There are detailed procedures available to all staff which clearly outline what should be done if there is a concern about any child, although these do not reflect the recent changes in national and local procedures in relation to Local Safeguarding Children's Boards. However, training is accessed regularly to ensure that there is a continuing awareness of current safeguarding children procedures, with some staff members about to access training organised by the local authority.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children aged under three years are contented and happy, enjoying the opportunities for child-initiated free play time which staff ensure is available for all children, but especially benefits these younger children. This gives them the opportunity to explore and investigate at their own individual level and at their own pace. They enjoy construction activities, water play, collage activities and role play and are particularly interested in the outdoor activities, for example, using the wheeled toys on the hard area, role playing with the roadwork's resources and exploring the nature area for insects. Children of this age group are supported well within the setting, with staff sensitive to their need for more child-initiated time and appropriate adult-led times. Planning reflects the needs of children in this age group and children are busily engaged with age-appropriate activities which engage them and that they find interesting. Assessment uses the 'Birth to three matters' framework to track children's individual learning and helps staff to plan effectively for the next steps in development.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children have good support and interaction from staff, who are very obviously committed to providing a happy, fun and caring learning environment where children are enabled to make good progress in all areas of development. The well organised routine and stimulating and interesting environment allows children to become involved and focused on their chosen activities and gives them time to extend and reinforce their learning. For example, the adult-led water play activity is left out so that children can continue to explore displacement, pouring and splashing water. In addition, activities which are focus led are age-appropriate, for example, younger children enjoy building with blocks whilst staff encourage them to sort out groups of bricks in colour order, thus reinforcing colour recognition.

Children are keen and interested to learn, they engage positively with staff and other children and obviously enjoy their time at the setting. There is plenty of laughter and fun which shows that they are happy, settled and contented in the learning space, thus enabling them to make good progress through the learning goals. The use of the outdoor area is currently within the routine as a set period of time, and this limits children's use of this valuable space as an extension to their learning. Good use is made of the natural world around them when they take a nature walk to the conservation area to search for insects and tadpoles. Children show enthusiasm, delight and surprise when they notice a frog trying to jump out of the water container or when they notice insects under a log.

Children aged three and four years of age are supported well in their development of all areas of learning. An older child is very well supported as she chooses to spend some time at the writing table, overwriting letters on laminated cards, writing her name in full and is progressed in this when staff show her how to form the letter p correctly. Younger children are encouraged to spend time overwriting simple letter forms to encourage concentration and pencil control. Other children develop their writing skills as they write lists on a pad in the home corner as part of their role play. They persevere with a tower of building blocks which keep falling over as it gets taller and predict what might happen next if they build it on the ridge of the carpet.

Assessments are very detailed and effectively track children's development through the stepping stones. Staff have worked hard on this aspect and continue to develop their observational skills so that children's children can be monitored. Observations are made on a daily basis and photographic evidence is a key tool for assessment. These inform overall assessment records, which are then translated into areas for improvement and fed back into future planning. Staff are very good at knowing what the children need to do next and know that they learn best through valuable experiences and time for child-led play, thus reinforcing and extending their learning. However, initial assessments are currently not informed by parents knowledge of what their children can do, thus a secure starting point for learning is not always evident.

Planning is thorough and covers all aspects of the early learning goals. Small group planning is very detailed and ensures that children's individual learning needs are monitored and met effectively. In addition, staff are also very aware of children's individual stages of development within planned and free play activities and know what they need to do in order to progress, for example, supporting more able children to form letters correctly or younger children to develop their listening skills at story time.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Understanding of diversity is promoted appropriately for children through themed activities and access to resources such as books, dolls and small world people and posters. They learn about the world around them through theme work and exploration of their local environment, for example, when they explore the nature area for insects. Children's individual needs are accommodated and supported well within the daily routine of the setting, having good opportunities to make choices and become independent, with good encouragement from staff to enable this independence to develop, for example , in the provision of cups and a jug of water for drinks throughout the session. Procedures are in place in order to allow the setting to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Staff work closely with parents and other support agencies to ensure that children's needs are met consistently.

Children are well-behaved, busy, occupied, keen and interested to learn. They motivate themselves and enjoy the wide range of activities which are accessed in free play or made available in imaginative, age-appropriate activities by supportive and enthusiastic staff. Behaviour is consistently good, with children developing positive relationships with other children and staff, who use appropriate techniques to foster positive behaviour. They are constantly praised and their efforts are acknowledged, for example, through discussion, taking photographs of achievements and in displays of their own work. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Regular information is available in the form of newsletters, notices, photographs and through good daily contact. A detailed prospectus is given to all parents which outlines the childcare provision effectively, although staff acknowledged that there was little information given here about the areas of development in the Foundation Stage and agreed to look at this in more detail. Regular meetings are organised so that parents can be informed of their child's progress and development, through the child's key worker, although the setting state that uptake from parents is limited. However, the setting seeks to include parents wherever they can, for example, in encouraging them to review what they provide in lunch boxes so that children can begin to eat a healthier, balanced diet.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. Children benefit from the committed staff team who work hard to ensure an enjoyable experience for children and who have a secure overview of what can be done to further meet the needs of the children. Children are happy and comfortable within a child-friendly environment and benefit from a stable staff group who obviously enjoy caring for children and ensure that they have an interesting learning environment to support their ongoing development.

Staff are aware of current good practice guidelines and develop and extend their experience, for example, through training, access to childcare publications and regular team meetings to discuss any issues. Children benefit from the staff's commitment to accessing as much training as possible so that the provision for education and care is continually improved. Staff appraisals and a clear management structure all help to ensure that staff are committed to providing an exciting, happy and comfortable space for the children in their care. Staff work together well to ensure that the education for children is good and that all children can make progress at their own individual level. They work hard to provide an interesting, fun and caring environment for children.

All staff working with children have appropriate childcare qualifications and experience and have strong links with the adjacent school, which helps to support continuity once children move on. Good child to staff ratios mean that children have good individual attention where required and this helps them to develop well, for example, when a more able child is developing her writing skills and is supported well by a staff member for some time. Sound procedures are in place for ensuring that children are cared for by staff who have had appropriate experience, enjoy working with children and have completed appropriate checks. Recent changes to the committee are in the process of being updated.

Documentation, policies and procedures are all organised very well and are clearly working documents. This has improved since the previous inspection, where there were a number of policy issues raised. Regular review of procedures ensures that these documents reflect the

practice within the setting, informed by all staff so that they are clear about what is expected. Other records relating directly to children are stored confidentially and in line with requirements. Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the previous inspection a number of issues were raised in relation to the care aspect, where policies and procedures required some updating, staff were required to update their knowledge and understanding of childcare issues and where activities for younger children were not age-appropriate. All of the issues raised have been addressed, with policies updated so that they reflect the setting and are in line with standards, training accessed on a much more regular basis so that staff are more knowledgeable about childcare issues and activities for all children appropriate to their age and stage of development so that children can progress.

In relation to the nursery education, the issues raised around more opportunities for mark-making, planning for all areas of development and ensuring that parents can be informed about children's progress and share what they know have all been addressed and have improved. Children have plentiful opportunities to make marks, practice their early writing skills and access appropriate activities which cover all development areas. Parents now have opportunities to see their child's progress records but do not currently have sufficient opportunities to share what they know about their children's development on entry into the setting. This has been raised as a recommendation at this inspection.

### **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**

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):

- make sure that written permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is appropriately worded in order to cover all eventualities of acting in an emergency
- update the child protection procedure so that it reflects recent changes in relation to safeguarding children.

## **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 provision for children to extend and reinforce their learning in an environment which encourages an indoor/outdoor learning environment
- provide more formal opportunities for parents to share what they know about their children so that starting points for assessments can be fully informed.

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