

Farmborough Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY346943
Inspection date	14 May 2007
Inspector	Timothy Butcher
Setting Address	Farmborough VC Primary School, The Street, Farmborough, BATH, BA2 0FY
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Registered person	Farmborough 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?

Farmborough Playgroup has recently changed premises from Farmborough memorial hall. It now operates from a classroom within Farmborough VC Primary School, Farmborough, Bath and North East Somerset. The group is managed by a parent committee. The pre-school playgroup have use of their own playroom, toilets and secure outdoor area. They are also able to use additional school facilities. The playgroup is open from 09:00 to 12:00 on Monday, Tuesday and Friday and from 09:00 to 13:00 on Wednesday term time only. The playgroup have hopes to increase their opening hours in the future. The playgroup is registered to care for 20 children aged two to five years. There are currently 18 children on roll and of these 17 are in receipt of Nursery Education funding. The group supports children with special needs. There are four members of staff who work with the children of whom three hold level 3 qualifications in childcare. The setting has developed good links with the primary school and advisors from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is actively promoted. Children are sensitively cared for should they have an accident and require first aid. There are clear policies and procedures for dealing with accidents and procedures are consistently followed. Parents are kept fully informed and asked to sign in acknowledgement that information has been shared with them and receive a copy of the accident record. At least half the members of staff hold a first aid certificate.

Children are cared for in a clean environment because staff understand that standards of hygiene must be maintained in order to prevent the risk of the spread of infection. For example, they wipe down the table surfaces before and after snack time. All children learn about good personal hygiene through routine procedures, such as hand washing. They ask to go to the toilet and know to wash their hands afterwards. This helps them to take some responsibility for their own hygiene and supports their growing independence. The staff provide appropriate guidance to those children just developing these skills.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. Snack-times are very sociable times for children as the staff sit along side them and warmly converse. Snacks usually include a choice of fruit pieces. Individual children's preferences and allergies are taken into account and managed by staff. Children drink either milk or water at snack time. They have some opportunity to grow in independence, for example, a child is nominated to take responsibility for offering the fruit to the others and carefully carries the plate around. Children talk and learn about healthy eating as they eat, for example, a child talks about eating bananas with cereals at home. They learn about healthy options in a variety of ways such as through activities planned around cooking and others planned around growing vegetables, like carrots, outside.

Children have many opportunities to get fresh air and exercise and this helps promote a healthy life-style. Children play outside usually each session where they practise their climbing and balancing skills. They climb under and over the large red block and use it imaginatively as a boat to row each other around, stretching and making circles with their arms as they do so. They take part in activities such as throwing a ball and kicking a football. They use their imaginations with a long piece of tube to pretend to be the fire service. They use the hose to put out a fire and as they do so they move around, each holding an end. As they do so they develop a sense of their own and others' space. The group have somewhat limited outside storage space currently and so children do not yet have access to the sit-on and wheeled equipment that has been purchased, however, there are some other options for vigorous play and there is sufficient outside equipment overall. Children have good opportunities to develop small muscle skills and hand-to-eye coordination through a wide range of carefully selected and appropriately planned, free flow activities. They use paint brushes, construction toys, scissors and rollers with play dough. They control pencils with increasing skill when mark making and writing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety overall is promoted well. Children have a safe environment in which to play. The provider has carried out a thorough risk assessment of the new premises both prior to, and after, the move to the school site. Daily visual checks are undertaken of the premises and of

the equipment put out in readiness for children. Smoke detection equipment and the fire blanket are in place. Electric socket covers are in place. The premises are very secure and access to the playroom is closely monitored. Staff are vigilant and a visual check of the outside area is made prior to children going outside. Children begin to learn about their own personal safety and that of others, for example, they are prompted to move the big red block safely and to be mindful of others when they jump on it and crawl under it. At registration time they are reminded of the fire safety measures they learned from the recent visit to the school by the fire service. New equipment, such as the computers, have yet to be added to the risk assessment so that the control measures can be reviewed. The potential hazards to children, for example, from trailing leads, have been addressed.

Children enjoy a safe environment in which to play. The playroom is made attractive and there are examples of children's work on display. Children have a sense of belonging and have their own labelled coat pegs and self-register system. Children benefit from the good range of resources rotated in and out of use and from the thoughtful use of space throughout the playroom. Resources are appropriately laid out for their purpose and cover each area of learning. This effectively encourages children to exercise choice and to have easy access to the toys and materials on view. Resources that are stored in cupboards have yet to be made as accessible. However, the group are aware of this and have plans to change some of the storage and to re-instate the photographs and labelling to facilitate easy access. There is a good range of safe furniture and equipment to meet the needs of children.

Children have their welfare safeguarded because staff have a clear awareness of their responsibilities in regard to the protection of children and a sound understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of potential abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The quality of care is good. Children are warmly welcomed. They are eager to attend and thoroughly enjoy their time at the pre-school. Children settle well as staff sensitively support them to separate from parents and carers. Staff provide good levels of reassurance and plenty of close contact to children until they become sufficiently self-assured to play independently and in groups. Consistent daily routines provide structure for children. Staff are kind and caring and provide appropriate praise and support and this helps children to gain in self-esteem and become confident. Children enjoy a balanced and interesting range of activities and are able to make some independent choices in their play. This helps them to have the confidence to explore and to learn new skills. Children are happy, relaxed and enjoy the warm interactions with staff.

Nursery education.

The quality of learning and teaching is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning, given their starting points. Teaching is rooted in a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn. Staff use their skills effectively, to ask questions of children and to extend children's thinking, language and communication skills. They sensitively support less-able children to become more confident and encourage them to take a full part in both the free play and in the more structured focus activity groups.

A yearly plan sets out the types of activities and topics to be followed and ensures that the Foundation Stage curriculum is covered. Weekly planning provides the detail of specific activities and the learning objectives for children and these are linked to each area of learning. Some general ideas about differentiation are used to guide staff in their support of children with differing abilities.

Activities are evaluated and children's progress is assessed and monitored using a learning profile. The group have a new system in place but this is only partially implemented and not used for the oldest children. Regular high quality observations of what children have learned have yet to be consistently documented and recorded. As a result, individual children's next steps in development are not being so clearly identified, although both systems track children's general progress. Information for parents and carers about children's progress has yet to be shared as regularly as it was previously under the previous registration.

For some part of the session children are divided into three ability/age groups for a series of focused activities. Focus groups cover three particular areas of learning: communication, language and literacy, maths and creative development. Different aspects of learning are brought together well with opportunities for children to count, name and practise letter sounds in a variety of situations both during free-play and in focus groups.

Most children develop good communication skills as they have many opportunities to practise language during their play. Many children confidently answer questions at registration and circle times. Less confident children are skilfully encouraged by staff to contribute. Children enjoy the whole-group experience. They concentrate well and listen and respond. There are regular opportunities for children to sing together and to read stories. As a result children are motivated. They have their interest maintained and learn to express themselves.

Children are developing their literacy skills. Most can recognise their own written name, for example, at self-registration. They discuss letter sounds in different contexts throughout their day. For example, at registration a child spontaneously draws the letter 'M' in the air with her hand and says 'up and down, up and down ' as she correctly describes the way the letter is formed. Children have meaningful opportunities to write and make marks, for example, in the home corner a child pretends to write a message on the paper provided. She pretends to be a shop assistant and to take a phone call and writes the message. Documentary evidence demonstrates that children are taught to hold a pencil correctly and to develop pencil skills.

Children make sound progress in mathematics. They successfully learn to count in a wide range of situations, including adult led and focussed activities, free play opportunities and also through routine. Children count fingers, plates and other children spontaneously at snack time. At registration they are helped to count 1-14 correctly. They compare shape and use mathematical language, such as 'smaller' and 'taller' when they compare each others height. They are skilfully helped to count and match numbers pairs in a mathematics focus group. They explore volume and capacity at the water tray.

Children have some good opportunities to learn about the world around them. They look with awe at the branch of a tree when outside spontaneously commenting on the 'explosion' of leaves and new growth. A child explores the window box and finds a worm that she decides 'would make a good pet'. She and another child look for leaves for it to eat. Children learn about the weather and days of the week during registration time and identify that it is sunny and windy. They notice and comment on the changes, when they go outside. They have African snails to study in the playroom and learn about nature and the world around them outside;

such as through growing carrots from seeds in a container. Although children have regular opportunities to go outside, the opportunities to take their learning outside through imaginative and creatively presented activities, are less in evidence.

Children are making generally good progress in their creative development. They have good opportunities to express themselves creatively because they explore a wide range of materials, such as paint, sand/water, play dough and cut and stick activities in some form on a daily basis. Children benefit from the opportunities to use their imaginations as they freely access the role play corner, for example photographic evidence shows children happily and thoroughly involved in a wide range of activities linked to the home corner being set up as a castle. Children help cut out the ramparts from card and make crowns that they decorate. They clearly enjoy making good use of dressing up materials and take part in a banquet. Recent themes for the home corner have included: doctors, teachers, photographers, the police and fire service.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with respect and enjoy warm relationships with staff. Staff provide good role models. They offer children choice and provide plenty of praise and encouragement. As a result children grow in confidence and are helped to feel positive about themselves. Staff have high expectations of children and have a positive approach to the management of behaviour. They provide clear and consistent boundaries. Children generally behave well towards each other. They show concern should a child be upset. They learn to share and take turns and this is practised in a number of ways throughout the session.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff build good relationships with parents and carers and know families well. Parents report very positively about the approachability of staff, the activities on offer and some aspects of communication. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their child's day. However, parents and carers are not kept well informed about their child's educational progress currently as previous processes for the sharing of information have not been continued. The systems of communication that help parents to be involved with children's learning are limited. The prospectus provides some solid information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and newsletters provide some information about forthcoming events. Some information about planned activities is displayed for parents. Parents and carers comment positively

about the quality of the new building and the facilities for children.

Planned activities successfully introduce children to the wider world and to different cultures, for example, the festival of Diwali is celebrated and a range of activities are organised around the theme. Children have an adequate range of activities and resources that promote a positive view of the wider world and that help develop their awareness of diversity. All children have equal access to all toys and activities. The pre-school has good links with the local community. Recent visitors, for example, from the fire service to the school, contribute to children's understanding of community, themselves and the world around them. The pre-school is developing a strong link with the local primary school and parents report positively on this aspect. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities have their needs closely met. Children with individual education plans are well supported as staff work very constructively to carry through specific plans. They work closely with carers and other professionals involved. Staff have

undertaken some training and are knowledgeable and caring. They show commitment and seek out resources to support individual children and parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a capable and skilled staff team and children benefit from the adult-child ratios. Time, space and resources are used very effectively to offer children a wide variety of experiences, in a child-friendly and well-organised environment. Documentation, policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare and care of children. There is a satisfactory vetting process that includes checks on staff's suitability but a weakness exists in the scrutiny of health. The on-going suitability of staff is adequately addressed through an appraisal system.

The staff team work well together and have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They take responsibility for planning and evaluating activities within their designated areas of responsibility, such as, for the focus groups. As a result children make good progress in each area of development and towards the early learning goals.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory. The knowledgeable and committed staff team are ably supported by a parents' management committee with clear roles and responsibilities. The manager and staff have recently transferred premises and are keen to develop in the new surroundings. The manager has a sound awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The pre-school is keen to fine-tune its use of the observation and assessment of children in conjunction with the new learning profile, to impact more effectively on the planning for children's next steps in development. They are keen to review the systems to keep parents and carers informed about the progress their children make in education.

Children make good progress, given their starting points. They are eager to attend and thoroughly enjoy their time at the pre-school. The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last education inspection it was agreed that the delivery and preparation of planned activities would be improved and that resources and opportunities for children to become more familiar with technology would be increased.

Since the last inspection the pre-school has changed premises and been re-registered. The pre-school has reviewed the way it groups children together. Children are now grouped into one of three focus groups for part of the session, according to ability. Activities are now planned and evaluated with a specific focus on learning. As a result children have better opportunities to explore creative materials and to develop their skills in mathematics and communication, language and literacy through focussed activities.

The setting now has some computers of its own and some other electronic equipment. As a result children have greater access to technology.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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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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):

- review the risk assessment to include new equipment introduced to the premises
- develop the vetting procedures further to establish closer scrutiny of new staff members health suitability

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 further systems for recording children's progress towards the early learning goals and use this information to plan activities which meet their individual learning needs
- develop further the partnership with parents to share information about their children's achievements

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