

Seaton Delaval Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 301821 |
| Inspection date | 26 June 2007 |
| Inspector | Julie Larner |
| Setting Address | Seaton Delaval Community Centre, Elsdon Avenue, Seaton Delaval, Northumberland, NE25 0BW |
| Telephone number | 07980 205590 upto 1215 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Seaton Delaval 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 satisfactory. 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?

Seaton Delaval Playgroup opened in 1968. The group is located in Seaton Delaval Community Centre, Northumberland, where it operates from two playrooms in the building. The group operates from Monday to Friday, from 09.15 to 11.45, term time only.

Children attending the group are from the surrounding local and wider area and attend a variety of sessions. The group is registered for the maximum of 24 children from two to under five years. There are currently 24 children on roll, and of these, 16 receive funding for nursery education. The group supports children with learning difficulties.

The group is committee-run and has two full-time and two part-time permanent staff caring for the children, two of whom hold an appropriate childcare qualification. The group receives support from early years advisors based in the local authority. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from cross-infection well by good staff practices and procedures. Staff wipe down tables and surfaces regularly and, in particular, at times when children are about to eat. In emergency situations, such as children being ill whilst they are attending, staff distract the remaining children and take them downstairs. This ensures they are free from risks and safeguards their welfare. Whilst children readily take care of their own personal hygiene, for example, by washing their hands after visiting the toilet, staff do not sufficiently promote good personal hygiene before snack time, which means that children do not fully learn about the importance of this.

Children benefit from a healthy diet of fruit and milk or water. Snack time is a social occasion where children talk to each other about what they have done at home and what they like playing with. Children readily take responsibility for appropriate tasks, such as giving out the drinks, which all children join in with through an established rota system. Children's dietary needs are met appropriately as staff collect clear information from parents about children's individual needs. Staff knowledge of children's individual needs is good, showing that clear, effective systems for sharing information contribute to the children's welfare.

Physical activities are enjoyed enthusiastically by the children. Some children rush downstairs to see what is available for them in the hall area in the morning. Upon finding the camouflage net wrapped over the climbing frame, they begin to crawl, slither and climb underneath to explore the area with other children. Staff show a very positive attitude towards helping children to be active by providing worthwhile, spontaneous and fun equipment and games that the children relish. Children love helping each other to spin round on the mini-roundabout to see how fast they can go. They work well in co-operation together to start to move the equipment around as they take turns to push with their feet and laugh as they travel around fast.

Staff plan a varied and appropriate wealth of physical play to extend the children's learning and help them gain new skills. They get involved in helping children to climb up on blocks and jump to their chosen number on a mat below. Well-thought-out obstacle courses, where children balance, negotiate cones and use mats as stepping stones to jump help children to gain good control over their bodies. They negotiate pathways and space well and extend their skills further by jumping as far as they can off blocks and mats.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children remain safe in an environment that is free from risks due to adequate staff supervision and procedures. Around the setting there are clear notices reminding staff to replace socket covers, detailed fire drills where staff hold specific responsibilities, and visual daily checks carried out on the premises by the staff team, all of which contribute to the children's safety. Staff awareness of ensuring the provision is secure and locking the door after the children have arrived ensures that they are not at risk from unauthorised persons.

Staff and children enjoy lively, spontaneous discussions about safety. They talk about what happens if they touch something hot and staff comment that it is best to 'ask mammy' before touching something they are unsure of. Regular reminders are provided by staff to ensure that

children learn about the rules of the setting. They remind children not to push on the stairs and to walk sensibly, helping them to learn about keeping themselves and others safe.

Children are interested in an adequate range of toys and equipment, with toys for physical play being good. Children move freely around the areas of the group, choosing what they want to do from a selection of construction, jigsaws, small world, imaginary toys and books. Children mostly select toys themselves as these are easily accessible; for example, tea sets and pretend food are kept in a box on the floor. Some children enjoy challenges as they complete difficult jigsaw puzzles with help.

Children are cared for in a comfortable environment where pictures and work displayed on the noticeboard show that these are valued by staff. Areas are set up for different types of play to provide a satisfactory range of experiences for children. However, the lack of an attractive and stimulating comfortable area impacts on the children's ability to rest or play quietly and means they rarely visit the book corner on their own.

Staff show an adequate understanding of child protection issues. Some staff complete training to ensure their knowledge is up to date with current practice. Fair procedures to pass on information to the whole staff team mean that all staff are aware of the basic signs and symptoms relating to child protection. Satisfactory procedures ensure that information is passed on to the relevant agencies, which safeguards the children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and relaxed in the setting. They have positive relationships with staff; for example, they receive cuddles from them and are keen to tell them about what they have been doing at home.

Nursery Education

Children have good relationships with each other. They happily play together and enjoy conversations about what they are doing. They treat each other with respect as they ask others to pass a certain shape of brick when they are constructing towers and thank them for doing so. Children show concern for others when they are upset; for example, one child puts their arm around another child's shoulder and asks what is wrong. They are keen to negotiate with rectangle and square bricks to build their models, which they do well and thank other children readily when they help them to find certain colours. Children are proud of their achievements as they keenly show each other their robots and are confident about making choices, for example, when they choose the shape of their robots head.

Some children communicate confidently in both small and large groups. They share their experiences as they talk about what they have done at the weekend, such as making 'big sandcastles' and how they will be taller than their large model when they are seven. Children listen to instructions mostly successfully; for example, when they are asked to play with balls on a certain side of the hall, they move across. Although children clearly enjoy listening to stories, there are not regular opportunities for them to share these as a large group to allow them to learn from other children and practise recalling what they have heard or thinking about what will happen next. Some children can write their name and many enjoy drawing; however, opportunities for children to write for a purpose using pens, paper and pencils in different areas, such as the home corner, are limited.

Children show some interest in numbers as they notice two rabbits in a book. They have opportunities to count within the daily routine as the staff ask how many girls there are and how many boys, which children count successfully together. They are beginning to use mathematical language in their play and are starting to understand concepts, such as height and size well. Children enjoy constructing and building for a purpose as they work together to build a train track and to fix their robots together. Whilst this is a worthwhile opportunity, as staff ask children about shapes and colours, teaching is sometimes too prescriptive and does not allow children to use their own ideas sufficiently.

Children are beginning to use their senses as they make comments about pom-poms being 'soft' and that they 'tickle' as they rub them on their face. They enjoy imaginary play and examine each other on the 'operating table' with stethoscopes and listen to each other's hearts. Children are observant at noticing similarities and differences as they talk about the colours of pencils and tables and confidently state if these are the same or not. Some older children offer suggestions very readily as they explore the carrots they have been growing; they notice that they are small and children think they are, 'Not ready because it's only small' but say that, 'It might be ready in September'.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff plan an interesting and fairly varied range of activities that some children are enthusiastically involved in as they gather around the table to see what is being made. Some children are extended adequately by staff, as staff ask them to describe their picture or get out a harder jigsaw at the children's request. Staff show an adequate understanding of the stepping stones and Foundation Stage but, at times, teaching does not allow children to use their own ideas or successfully incorporate active learning, for example, when children complete worksheets.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children behave well in the setting. They mostly listen to instructions and are keen to help and take responsibility as they tidy away some toys and ring the bell to let children know it is snack time. Staff ensure that all the children are included by maintaining a rota system for children to take their turn. Some staff show a positive understanding of how to deal with behaviour issues that are appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children. For example, they remind them how to be careful on the climbing frame and what might happen if they are not. A high emphasis is placed on encouraging the children to use manners well and say 'please' and 'thank you'; most children use these consistently with other children and staff in the group. The children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children have some opportunities to learn about diversity through their daily play as there are jigsaws and a few books to help them learn about differences. Children play with all of the toys and staff promote equal opportunities adequately within the setting. Children's individual needs are taken into account as staff have positive procedures that work well with the individual children and are mainly consistently used. Linking up with other professionals, for their knowledge and expertise, works adequately to help children understand routines.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are verbally informed about what their children have been doing, by staff, as they collect them at the end of the session. Adequate information in a parents' handbook and on a noticeboard in the setting helps to keep parents sufficiently informed. The staff mostly consistently inform parents of the procedures of the group and because of this some parents know they are able to look at their children's work in

their files. However, parents are not adequately informed about their child's educational progress on a regular basis. Clear information about dietary needs and any health issues are discussed with the staff; however, staff do not collect information from parents about what their children can do when they start to enable them to find out about the children's individual development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are relaxed and comfortable in the setting. They choose from a mixture of free play and structured activities that they enjoy as most children are engrossed in their play for the whole of the session. Children are encouraged to participate in adult-led activities which most of them are happy to do. Staff question children well to help them to begin to talk about what they have done; for example, they ask children to tell them about their pictures they have drawn.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff work well together as a team. They show an adequate understanding of their roles and responsibilities to provide a satisfactory standard of care for the children. They share relevant information with each other about the children to ensure they meet their individual needs. Staff mostly deploy themselves effectively to support children's play and learning and always ensure that children are safe. The setting do not have a key worker system in place to ensure that information is effectively gained and passed on to parents.

Satisfactory policies and procedures are in place to contribute to the care and welfare of the children. The necessary documentation is maintained in a fairly organised and confidential manner.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, in relation to the care of the children, the group agreed to: develop and implement an action plan that sets out how supervisors will achieve a level 3 qualification; ensure the hours of attendance of visitors are recorded; expand the range of play resources and activities to support all areas of children's development; and ensure that children have an appropriate range of resources that reflect diversity.

The manager has an appropriate qualification relating to childcare, as does one other staff member. Visitors' times of attendance are now noted in the daily register, showing an accurate record. The amount of resources reflecting diversity is still fairly limited; however, the group have made progress in the amount of resources that are readily available to children since the previous inspection. The group have a fair range of equipment to support the areas of children's development.

In relation to the education of the children, the group agreed to make the book area more appealing to children and provide children with regular opportunities to practise writing and mark-making.

The group have been mainly successful in addressing the recommendations in relation to the care of the children and have had some success in addressing the areas relating to education. During this inspection, whilst the group stated they had rearranged the book corner since the previous inspection, it was not sufficient to entice and stimulate children to visit this area alone.

Children have some opportunities to use pencils and paper to help develop their mark making skills; however, an enthusiastic approach, providing worthwhile opportunities to develop this skill in different areas, such as the role play area, will enhance children's learning further.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 satisfactory. 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):

- ensure that children learn about good personal hygiene effectively, for example, by washing their hands before having snacks
- provide an attractive, comfortable area where children can rest or play quietly
- devise an effective key worker system to ensure that relevant information is consistently passed on to parents.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that parents are effectively informed about their child's educational progress on a regular basis
- ensure that teaching allows opportunities for children to freely learn as they explore the environment and also allows them good opportunities to use their own ideas
- provide worthwhile opportunities for children to practise their writing and early mark making skills, for example, in the role play area.

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