

Treasure Island Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	507945
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Inspector	Lorraine Wardlaw
Setting Address	Popley Fields Centre, Carpenters Down, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG24 9AE
Telephone number	01256 414014
E-mail	
Registered person	Treasure Island 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?

Treasure Island Playgroup first opened in 1978 but moved to its present site in 1996. It is run by a voluntary management committee. The playgroup operates from two rooms in a community centre, and has a fully fenced garden. The centre is situated in Popley, near to Basingstoke, and serves the local area.

The playgroup offers sessional care for children aged two years to under five years. Up to 26 children may attend at any one time and there are currently 31 children on roll. This includes 26 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup is able to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 11:45 Monday to Friday and from 12:30 until 15:00 on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. There is an optional lunch club on a Wednesday, for afternoon children from 12:00 until 12:30.

The playgroup employs six members of staff, including the manager, to work with the children. Five out of six staff are trained in early years to National vocational level three and the remaining staff member is about to commence training to National vocational level two.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is appropriately promoted by staff who undertake cleaning procedures to provide a suitable environment for them, which helps prevent cross contamination. For example, the toilets are cleaned at midday, and tables are wiped before children eat. Children are learning personal hygiene routines, by the majority of staff, who encourage them to use the tissues located in the playrooms. Children wash their hands, with fresh running water, before they eat their snack. Parents are informed should any child develop a childhood illness and a wall chart informs staff of infections they need to be aware of and report. Children benefit from a nutritious snack of fruit, water or milk midway through the session. They are keen and eager to access the snack bar themselves, pouring their own drinks and selecting their fruit bowl, before sitting at a table. Staff are aware of the children with life threatening allergies and receive training to administer the necessary treatment such as using an epi-pen. Children enjoy a varied range of physical activities; they have free flow access to the outdoors, playing in the fresh air at a time of their choosing, which helps them to lead a healthy lifestyle. They develop self confidence in their physical skills as they skilfully scoot around the circular path and balance on the low, colourful beam. Children access some tools and materials to develop their fine motor skills. For example, they cut up the play dough with scissors, use paint brushes and writing materials. The necessary documentation is in place to support children's good health such as complete medication and accident records.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a suitably safe environment and where the committee members are undertaking checks to ensure they are safe to manage the playgroup. Unchecked staff are aware they are not allowed to be left alone with children. Staff sometimes complete daily checks on the play area and respond to risks they identify, such as when a child leaves the room without it's parent, staff deploy a second staff member at the community building, exit door. Although written risk assessments are undertaken, they are not regular enough and do not thoroughly address all safety issues. For example, the play room in the community building can be easily opened by unauthorised people, putting children at risk. Children regularly practise the fire drill, which is understood by staff and good records are kept. Children are beginning to learn about safety measures whilst playing, such as not running in the playroom, which is supported by a visual reminder, which is discussed with the children at registration time. Children play with a suitable selection of safe toys and resources, some of which they can access safely and easily. They are appropriately protected from possible abuse because staff understand and follow the safeguarding children procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children come into the playgroup happily and after group registration, they settle easily into activities of their choice. They enjoy the satisfactory range of activities and experiences on offer to them. For example, many children choose to play outside with the wheeled toys or act out home experiences in the role play area. During the session children explore and experiment with the sand or find bugs in the leaves in a trough. They look inquisitively at the birds nest when it is pointed out to them by an adult on the nature table. New recruits to the playgroup

are given sympathetic support by the adults in their play, such as playing together on the floor and talking about the animals, with the small world's resources. Children have opportunities to persevere at activities for lengths of time such as concentrating on a computer programme. However, the routine after snack time is more adult directed and does not always suit the younger child and play space is not used to its best advantage indoors. Children relate appropriately to the adults who take an interest in what the children say and do.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Overall, children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals because practitioners understand how children learn and are familiar with the Foundation Stage curriculum. An appropriate, practical learning environment is available each day which interests and suitably motivates the children to participate and learn. The curriculum is planned adequately with some of the stepping stones identified as learning intentions for children. Staff know children fairly well and can identify their development levels; they are beginning to record their observations of the children's capabilities but these assessments are not used, as yet, to effectively plan individual or small groups of children's next steps in their learning. At present the observations loosely inform the planning, such as identifying sorting or counting as a focus for the whole group of children.

Children's spoken language is developing with most of the staff encouraging children to talk; but not all staff consistently encourage their thinking skills by asking open ended questions. Children have opportunities to write emergently and for a purpose; on the wipe boards in the garden and in role play situations such as writing orders in the café. Children are learning to recognise their own names during self registration and snack time. They handle books with interest in the cosy corner and are fairly attentive during story time, but less attentive during whole group registration and discussion time. Children are learning to count by incidental opportunities during continuous curriculum time, such as counting the jumps on the trampoline and during registration. However, there is less emphasis on recognising numerals in the routines and during free play. Children are able to recognise two dimensional shapes in the environment, such as triangle and star and staff talk about the height of towers when children build with duplo. However, children have limited awareness of number problems because staff are not confident in posing number problems in the routine and in their play. Children observe living things such as the African snails and take an interest when they find things in the garden such as a frog or spider, observing them closely looking at the features and colourings. They enjoy helping to plant the communal garden and observe vegetables growing such as onions and beetroot. Some children show an independent interest in the computer using the mouse with skill to change the game on the programme. Children enjoy creative opportunities such painting at the easle with a variety of tools such as sponge rollers and combs, and selecting collage materials from the creative trolley. Children use musical instruments, whilst happily marching and singing in the garden and older children love the 'sticky kids' tape moving their bodies to the music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated as individuals and supported appropriately by staff to develop positive attitudes to others. They gain an understanding about people and the wider world through planned activities, such as playing blind man's bluff and creative activities during the celebration of Diwali. There are a few positive images of disability and culture displayed in the playgroup which helps children feel positive about themselves and appreciate differences. Children's

behaviour is generally good with minor incidences of squabbling being dealt with quickly and sympathetically by the adults. They are reminded of the rules 'to share and take turns' when they are shown the visual poster at registration time. Children receive positive praise and encouragement from some of the staff when participating in their activities. Children with learning difficulties are satisfactorily supported by the staff who identify children needing additional help. Staff work positively with their parents and outside agencies to ensure their needs are met. For example, they will actively work with speech therapists. The staff's relationships with it's parents is strong which has a positive impact on children's continuity of care; there is an open door policy which parents are comfortable with and good written and verbal communication takes place from the playgroup. Parents are able to receive copies of the group's policies and procedures and a summary of the important policies including the complaints procedure is available in the welcome pack for parents. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers receiving Nursery Education is satisfactory. Parents receive information regarding what the children are learning on the notice board and receive regular newsletters and literature about the curriculum offered. This includes annotated, up to date, photographs in albums, of the children learning through their play. Parents receive yearly progress reports and can see their child's records at any time and on special designated open days. Children take home their 'homework' folder which consists of a book to read with their parents and worksheets. Some parents talk highly of the advice they are given of how to extend children's learning and play at home. For example, a mum is able to borrow the till to add a different dimension to their child's role play tent and is given tips on extending the role play further.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for and learn in a suitably organised environment. However, maximum use is not yet made of the available space and the resources, to successfully promote the outcomes for children. Sound policies and procedures are in place which underpin most of the staff's practice, but not all are personal to the setting. A sound recruitment and vetting procedure is in place but it is not rigorous enough in determining prospective staff's suitability regarding their medical health. Good ratios are maintained which means that children receive appropriate supervision from the staff. All the necessary documentation and records are up to date and easily available for inspection. The setting meets the needs of range of the children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The manager has worked hard to improve the quality of the nursery education offered and is keen and committed to it's further improvement. She has a good working relationship with the staff and involves them in planning and the evaluation of the curriculum. For example, it was decided at a staff meeting to have two groups at story time to meet the children's various needs and help keep them focussed. However, the current monitoring systems do not assess the quality of the individual teaching practice offered by staff and does not assess if the routines, meet the needs of all age groups of children. Staff are starting to attend workshops to increase their skills and knowledge in implementing the Foundation stage curriculum, which in turn is cascaded to the rest of the staff team. Staff have opportunities, yearly to complete appraisals and to formally discuss their development.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection actions were made with timescales and compliance notices set in relation to National standards 1 (Suitability) and 13 (Child Protection). A warning letter was issued about the failure to notify Ofsted of significant changes at the setting. At the monitoring visit, Ofsted were not satisfied that the provider had complied with the notice in relation to National standard 13 and the actions relating to National standards 7(Health), National standard 11 (Behaviour) and National standard 3 (Care learning and play). The provider was given additional time to comply. Ofsted carried out a further visit to monitor compliance and were satisfied that the playgroup had measures in place to ensure that the National Standards were maintained.

A summary of the improvements since the inspection and monitoring visits are as follows; all committee members are undertaking checks to ensure they are suitable to manage the playgroup. The child protection procedure including the procedure should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff is strictly adhered to. These are in relation to the compliance notices. The playgroup were required to provide a stimulating range of activities and experiences daily, which challenges children appropriately in their learning. All staff at the setting attended training in 'developing a play based environment' and adapted and increased the resources and activities available for children, such as having an Autumn interest table to stimulate children's interest. This enables children to have a satisfactory level of play and learning. The playgroup were required to ensure positive steps are taken to promote the good health of the children and to prevent the spread of infection. Children are learning personal hygiene routines such as hand washing in running water after using the toilet and staff have increased their knowledge of infectious childhood illnesses and take the appropriate action when necessary. The premises are cleaned to a satisfactory standard. The playgroup were required to develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development. Staff evaluated the way they dealt with children's behaviour and now ensure that incidences of inappropriate behaviour do not go unnoticed with clear boundaries and rules given to children. The playgroup were required to develop and share documentation and records with parents, to inform them about the setting, its policies and procedures, the activities provided for the children, and their children's development (also applied to nursery education). The playgroup have worked hard in this area introducing open afternoons to share records and information, display the planning on the notice board and have devised a parent handbook with information about the curriculum and makes its policies and procedures available to parents. One of the nursery education actions was to improve systems to monitor and evaluate teaching and the curriculum. Monitoring of the curriculum takes place when the staff discuss their observations of the children and make changes, such as have two groups at story time instead of one large group. Activities are beginning to be evaluated. However, this is an area which requires further improvement and will remain a recommendation. The setting were also required to ensure that adults support children's learning effectively in all activities within the playgroup. The setting responded by employing an extra member of staff and a discussion took place about staff interacting with children effectively, which has improved the level of learning to a satisfactory level. The playgroup were also required to develop planning to ensure that all areas of learning are covered effectively and to assess children's progress more frequently and use the information to plan children's next steps in learning. A new planning system was introduced and staff are now making observations of children's capabilities. However, because these systems are in their infancy and staff need to build on their existing knowledge and skills, these will remain a recommendation to further improve the quality of teaching and learning.

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 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):

- re-evaluate the use of space in the playrooms, to maximise children's learning opportunities and increase access to resources
- ensure written risk assessments are carried out regularly and improve security to the playgroup door to prevent unauthorised access to the playgroup
- extend the information gathered when recruiting new staff to ensure they are medically fit to care for 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):

- continue to develop and implement the assessment and planning systems to ensure children of all abilities make good progress across all aspects within the areas of learning of the Foundation stage
- increase opportunities for children to solve simple number problems in the routine, to recognise numerals and to develop their thinking skills
- continue to develop the monitoring systems to ensure teaching practice facilitates children's learning and the routine suits all age and ability of children

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