

The Drive Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	128487
Inspection date	06 July 2007
Inspector	Fiona Sapler
Setting Address	The Drive, Ilford, Essex, IG1 3PP
Telephone number	020 8 518 2481
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Registered person	The Drive 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Drive Pre-School is run by a voluntary committee. It opened in 1974 and operates from a church hall and two adjoining rooms in Ilford in the London borough of Redbridge. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 35 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 09:15 to 12:00 and 12:30 to 15:15 term time only. There are currently 91 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs eight members of staff, working directly with the children. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Pedagogy Team and is participating in the Quilt quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are clearly learning ways they can keep themselves healthy. They confidently explain why they need to wash their hands before eating or cooking activities, and routinely wash their hands after using the toilet using the soap that is provided. Small steps in the bathroom and toilets ensure even the youngest children have independent and safe access to the toilets and hand basins. Children are also provided with convenient hand washing facilities close to their snack table and any messy play activities. This helps reinforce the importance of good hygiene practises. Bright, colourful posters around the setting highlight to the children additional ways they can keep themselves well and healthy. Visitors such as the dentist, support the importance of following worthwhile and practical health routines.

Children are protected as all accidents, including injuries that are already present when the children arrive at the preschool, are recorded comprehensively. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate. Children are further protected because the preschool gathers all relevant medical information and gains consent from parents for treatment in the case of an emergency.

Children independently access their snack comprised of fruit or plain biscuits. This is organised well to promote the children's self help skills as they select their own cups, pour their own drinks, of either milk from a jug or water from a cooler, and dispose of the dirty cups appropriately. Children enjoy meeting their friends at the snack table which provides a sociable place for them to eat and chat. The children's dietary needs are clearly displayed at the snack area to ensure all staff are aware of any allergies or dietary requirements. Children are learning about healthy eating when they discuss different foods and how they are good for them when, for example, they make a fruit salad to take home with them.

Children regularly gain from the benefits of active play indoors and outside. A designated room provides space for them to take part in different physical activities each day. For example, on the day of inspection they were confidently negotiating the available space on bikes. They ride with control and have an awareness of each other as they move around the hall. Outside they are able to climb on the climbing frame, balance on beams, and jump on the trampoline. This helps keep them healthy, develop their physical skills and learn different ways their bodies can move. Older children are developing their hand eye co- ordination. They competently use a variety of brushes to excitedly 'paint' the walls with water, thread buttons onto string or use cutters, scissors and pencils in their play, as well as being supported to carefully cut up the fruit when they make their fruit salad.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The preschool uses three rooms in the setting and children are able to move from room to room freely and safely, making choices about their play from the numerous activities available. This helps the children feel comfortable and develops their decision making skills. The well maintained resources are stimulating, developmentally appropriate and suitable for the ages, stages of development and abilities of the children who attend. Posters and pictures around the setting reflect their own and other cultures and contribute to a sense of belonging.

Children understand ways they can keep themselves safe while they play and during activities. Staff members gently remind the children to be careful as they move around the building. They provide appropriate support, for instance, allowing the children to cut up their own fruit while ensuring that they are doing this safely with suitable equipment. Staff are very aware of their roles and responsibilities and ensure the children's safety as they provide a high level of supervision around the preschool. They are deployed very effectively within each room and in the garden. Children are unable to leave the building unaccompanied as the established procedures for their safe arrival and departure are highly effective and children only have access to appropriate areas within the pre school. Daily risk assessments both inside and out are recorded and ensure the environment continues to be safe place for the children to play. Children and staff practise the fire drill regularly meaning that they are aware of the procedures to follow in case of a fire.

The children are safeguarded as the staff are confident to act in a child's best interests if they are concerned about their welfare. Child protection procedures are clearly displayed and parents are informed of the manager's responsibility regarding child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive at the sessions happily and begin to explore their surroundings to discover the activities available to them. These are varied and stimulating and cover all areas of development. The children have opportunities to play creatively with shaving foam, participate in arts and crafts or enjoy experimenting with a range of materials such as sand and water. Their imaginations are nurtured when staff play alongside them in the 'shop' or baby clinic, extending their vocabulary and encouraging them to relate their play to their own experiences. This helps the children build on what they already know and make links with what is familiar to them.

The children use their own initiative when they choose from a range of resources stored on individual trolleys. This means that as well as playing with what is set out for them they are also able to select other resources and materials. This provides variety and helps the children to make their own choices about what they wish to play with.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff have undertaken Foundation Stage training and this informs the provision of a range of activities that effectively cover all areas of learning. They make brief observations of individual children throughout the session and use these observations to assess each child's progress and development along the stepping stones. Staff contribute to planning meetings where they discuss each individual child's progress and plan suitable activities to help children move towards the Early Learning Goals.

Children are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas through positive staff interaction. They confidently talk about their families and themselves in small and large groups and sit quietly, when necessary. For example, when watching their friends act out a story or when taking turns sharing their news and opinions in circle time. They co-operate and communicate well when interacting with adults and other children. They understand and confidently recount the pre school rules that they helped to devise, indicating their growing awareness of right and wrong and appropriate boundaries.

The children are beginning to represent numbers using their fingers when singing songs and to count up to ten, and sometimes beyond. They recognise single digits and some larger numbers when using a cash register in the 'shop'. Children demonstrate that they recognise shapes when they say they are cutting triangles from the dough to make pizza. They weigh food and their 'babies' during role play and understand concepts such as heavier and more than, although there are limited activities that develop their skills in calculating.

The children's vocabulary is extended when staff members introduce some interesting and complex words, such as skeleton, stethoscope, supermarket and shopkeeper, during their play. They have many opportunities to write with a purpose when writing shopping lists or compiling a list of their 'baby's' needs. The children thoroughly enjoy dressing up and acting out familiar stories when they take turns representing each animal in 'Dear Zoo'. They delight in entertaining their friends, and the 'audience' respond enthusiastically, excitedly waiting their turn to dress up and participate. Children show an interest in the many books that are available to them. They eagerly anticipate the next line in well known stories that are expressively read by the adults in the setting. Although children know the names of the letters of the alphabet and can recite these, they have few opportunities to enhance their pre reading skills by identifying the sounds the letters make.

Children are learning about different people's roles when playing in the pretend shop or baby clinic. Visits by police officers and dentists give them an additional insight into other peoples' lives. Children play competently on the computer. They are adept at controlling the mouse and have access to other mechanical instruments such as electronic games and the smoothie blender used in cooking activities. Children proudly talk about the plants they have cultivated and explain how they all shared the lettuce that they grew. They are also successfully growing cauliflowers, tomatoes and strawberries and have an understanding of time when they explain these aren't yet ready to be eaten and that they have to keep checking them. Children are able to satisfy their natural curiosity when they touch and explore items on the nature table and follow the trails real snails make on a piece of paper. The sensory area in the garden contributes to their appreciation and wonder of nature.

Children are beginning to explore colour and texture when they take part in arts and crafts activities, such as making marble prints and collages from a range of materials. Their creativity is nurtured when they listen to a range of music from around the world and create three dimensional models from recycled objects.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are learning about themselves, and diversity in the world around them, because they are provided with a range of worthwhile activities and resources. For example, an international lunch day has been organised where children, their parents and invited guests share food from a range of cultures. Photographs show children in their traditional dress celebrating Eid at the preschool. Dressing up clothes and cooking activities, such as when the children make chapattis, further promotes their appreciation of people's differences and similarities. There are a high proportion of children who attend who speak English as an additional language. Staff use the children's own language, if necessary, to provide comfort and support. This helps to increase the children's understanding and contributes to a sense of security. Children enjoy listening and dancing to a range of music from different cultures and staff demonstrate the traditional dancing, joining in enthusiastically. This positive approach fosters the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, although books and resources are used successfully

to help children understand people's different roles in society and to create an understanding of people's different abilities, some staff promote gender bias when commenting on specific activities whilst the children play. This suggests to children inappropriate inequalities in society

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are positively welcomed into the setting. A very strong emphasis on meeting children's individual needs, regardless of their ability, means that the setting is extremely inclusive. Additional resources are provided to ensure all children are able to participate fully in the day's activities. Support workers routinely work alongside permanent staff members to ensure that all children are able to meet their full potential and benefit equally from the activities on offer. The staff team liaise fully with parents and other professionals to ensure children's specific needs are effectively addressed and resourced.

Children behave well. They understand the need to share and take turns and benefit from consistent praise and encouragement and basic ground rules. They learn to cooperate and be kind to each other and are cared for by staff who provide appropriate role models showing respect and consideration for others.

Children and their parents are able to visit and spend time at the preschool during the term before they are due to attend, helping them feel secure and confident. Parents appreciate this and describe their children as extremely happy and contented at the setting. Staff are welcoming and friendly. This approach and comprehensive handbooks, that inform parents of the settings policies and procedures, help to promote continuity between the home and the preschool. The children's records include all necessary information to ensure their key worker is aware of each child's individual needs, relevant consent and required details. The complaints procedure is shared with parents in the handbook and the complaints log is accurately maintained and readily available.

Partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. They have access to their children's files and plans of activities. Display boards explain about the Foundation Stage, weekly themes and colours. Parents' evenings provide additional opportunities for staff and parents to discuss their child's progress and development. This ensure that parents receive sufficient information to become involved in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in an extremely well organised setting. Staff work together to effectively support the children in their play and learning. They provide a balanced and stimulating session where children are happily engaged in what is on offer and are receiving mostly positive messages that promote their self esteem and help them feel valued.

Leadership and management of Nursery Education is good. The manager is committed to ensuring each child meets their full potential while at the preschool. She carefully monitors the implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum through observation and aims to identify and address any weaknesses. She is supported by the Early Years Pedagogy team who provide advice and guidance as necessary. She has also sought to improve the service offered by participating in and completing relevant QuILT modules. These modules form part of a national quality assurance scheme to improve teaching and learning.

Most staff are qualified to at least level two and have annual appraisals that identify their strengths and weaknesses. They are able to attend ongoing training and workshops to ensure

their knowledge of childcare remains up to date and appropriate. Staff are actively involved in the assessment of the quality of the provision. This enables them to fully understand the aims of the preschool and the manager's ongoing commitment to improve the level of care and education provided. Children are safeguarded as effective recruitment and induction procedures ensure that people who work with the children are suitable to do so.

All required records that promote and protect the children's welfare are in place and well maintained. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection actions were set. The manager was asked to inform Ofsted of committee members details and to appoint a suitably qualified deputy. Ofsted received a letter containing the required details ensuring that the suitability of those providing care can be assessed and that a suitably qualified individual is available to take charge in the manager's absence.

Recommendations were also set relating to the systems in place to monitor and evaluate staff working in the setting and to provide opportunities for parents to receive regular information on their children's progress. The manager addressed these by implementing annual staff appraisals and informal supervisions. She also organises regular parents evenings and ensures parents are aware of the availability of children's files. Systems are now in place to facilitate the monitoring of staff to ensure their ongoing suitability to work with children and to provide parents with opportunities to be more fully involved in their child's time at the pre school.

Significant weaknesses at the last S122 inspection, a stand alone nursery education inspection, related to the provision of activities that promote the children's skills in communication, language and literacy and also in physical development. Activities are now planned and provided to ensure these areas of the curriculum are fully resourced and the children benefit from appropriate and positive staff interaction to ensure they are helped to progress along the stepping stones in these specific areas of 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 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 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):

- ensure all adults working in the setting have a clear understanding of how to effectively promote equality of opportunity

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):

- provide sufficient opportunities for children to develop their ability to calculate and to promote their pre reading skills by linking letters to the sounds they make

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