

Fairlight Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109418
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Inspector	Sue Taylor
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Registered person	Fairlight 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?

Fairlight Playgroup is a committee run group and opened in the 1970s. It operates from the hall and committee room of the Fairlight Village Hall. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. It is open Monday to Thursday from 09:30 to 12:00, during school term times. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 12 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, six children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area.

The playgroup employs three members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises, where children are cared for, are very clean, light and airy. Children benefit from being able to access the toilets on their own, developing independence. However, this is only possible on two days in the week, when they use the main hall. They learn about the importance of personal hygiene through explanations from the staff and daily routines, such as when they wash hands before the cooking activity. The use of paper towels and liquid soap for hand washing helps limit the risk of cross contamination.

Drinking water is available to children throughout the session, helping them to control their own thirst needs. However, it is not easily reached by the children themselves, on the days they use the main hall. Overall, they have healthy snacks, with the occasional biscuit. At times, snacks are placed directly onto the table surface. Although the tables are cleaned this does not teach children good eating practices.

Children have good opportunities for playing in the fresh air. They use the outdoor play area regularly. Various resources and activities are planned for, that help support their skills and development such as balancing. For example, they use the slide and ride on toys or practice throwing and catching. Daily access to pencils and some play materials help support their developing hand-eye coordination. Children's emotional well-being is promoted through the positive relationships they have with the friendly and caring staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, the premises are secure and the staff supervise the children well. However, not all risks are minimised as some doors, from the rooms that children use, are not secured. As a result, unvetted persons using the facilities, are able to enter the playgroup room, without staff supervision or knowledge. The outside play area is fully enclosed, however potential risks are not fully minimised as there is garden waste and past bonfire refuse in the area that children use.

The resources are in good condition, providing a suitable range of play and learning opportunities for children. The staff set the room up daily and are restricted in the wall space they have for displaying children's work. Children are able to have easy access to the play materials and make some choices about their play. They gain some awareness of how to keep themselves safe through staff discussions and activities. For example, they learn about crossing the road safely and talk about ways they could handle prickly plants.

The staff have a sound understanding of child protection. They are aware of their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children's welfare. The policy is clear and they have access to suitable guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well and develop positive relationships with the staff. They happily make choices about their play. The staff are very involved with the children as they play. Children's learning

is supported as staff ask open questions, that children willingly answer, talking about their play. There is planning and assessment in place but it is more relevant to the learning needs of the nursery funded children. There are no appropriate formal systems in place to ensure that the learning and development needs of the two-year-old children are fully met and promoted.

The children play well together and the staff are suitably aware of the younger children's levels of concentration. All children enjoy playing outside and exploring the environment. Daily use of pencils and crayons supports their developing pre-writing skills. Children are encouraged to be involved in regular cooking activities. For example, they help prepare macaroni cheese for snack time. This enables them to experience the finished product.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff have a sound awareness of how children learn through play and are gaining familiarity with the Foundation Stage curriculum. The planning systems cover the six areas of learning and generally provide a balanced curriculum, across the aspects, over the year. However, it is not easily clear how the links are made between the medium term and daily plans to enhance children's learning. The daily focus activities provide some informative and useful observations about children's learning and development. These are used to note children's progress in the assessment profiles. However, children's next steps in their learning or their own choices and ideas are not fully identified or planned for.

The organisation of the playgroup means that on some days children are unable to benefit from the experiences and challenges they have on other days. For example, having easy access to drinks or pouring drinks at snack time. This means their progress is not always positively supported. The children relate very well to the staff and are keen to get involved in the activities. They gain positive self confidence and develop an awareness of self care.

Children communicate easily with the staff, happy to chat about their lives and what they are doing. They learn to recognise their name and practise writing these. This also helps them in identifying some letter sounds. Children learn how factual books can provide information, for example, as they are displayed alongside items on the nature table. Children have daily access to pens and paper. These are also used to develop play in some role play scenarios. Access to resources such as paint brushes, glue sticks and threading help develop their pre-writing skills.

Children count confidently and gain an awareness of simple calculation, for example, as they match the number of children to the number of chairs needed. They learn about measuring during the cooking activity or as they compare feet and hand sizes. Children are able to explore the natural environment. Items they collect from the garden, or that staff bring in, are on display for them to investigate. They learn about life cycles as they observe tadpoles grow. The lap top computer and digital camera introduces them to information technology. They experience local events such as Harvest Festival and gain some awareness of other cultures and beliefs.

Children explore different textures such as soap flake 'gloop', coloured rice and pasta, in addition to sand or water. They experiment with sound when the musical instruments are out. Children get involved in imaginative play as they use the small world resources or the role play area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The staff act as good role models and children learn to respect others. The staff get to know the children well and adapt approaches to help meet individual children's care needs. Children gain an awareness of the wider world through planned activities or as they play with resources that provide positive images of others, although there are not many that reflect disability.

Children behave well and respond positively to staff. They understand acceptable behaviour from the caring and consistent interactions they have with the staff. Children are supported well, learning how to share and take turns. Children benefit from the praise and encouragement they get from the staff. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Good relationships develop with parents. They receive regular newsletters that keep them informed about the playgroup. They have verbal exchanges with staff, at the end of the session, about their child's day. They are made aware of the group's policies and procedures. They are welcome to stay and settle their child.

Partnership with parents of nursery education children is satisfactory. They have some information about the Foundation Stage, in the parent file, that shows how children learn through play. This includes some useful ideas of how they can support children's learning, at home. An assessment system is in place to inform parents about the progress their child is making towards the early learning goals. On occasions, some parents verbally receive ideas of how they can support their child's own learning at home. Parents regularly have the profiles to take home, although they are not routinely contributing to the assessment process.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

A basic recruitment and induction process is in place, helping to ensure staff are suitable. However, the current available detail is not rigorous and does not inform how an employee's medical suitability is checked. Ofsted has not been kept informed of changes to the committee and this is a breach of a Children Act regulation. The required policies and procedures are in place, although some detail differs from the policy handbook to that in the parent file. The information helps keep staff and parents aware of the group's practices, for example, about the complaints process and child protection.

The session's organisation provides opportunities for quiet and active play, with regular access to the outdoor area. The children benefit from the good adult to child ratios. They receive good support and encouragement from the staff, who are directly involved with their care and play at all times.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The staff team work well together and communication is positive. They are aware of their role and responsibilities. All staff are involved in the planning and assessment processes. They have bi-annual appraisals that help identify areas for development and further training is available. The manager identifies some areas for improvement and devises development plans. In general, the group integrates children's care and learning positively. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Progress has been made on the recommendations made at the last care inspection. As requested, the group have a named deputy in post and a basic induction process is in place. Amendments have been made to documentation as requested, relating to the policies for equal opportunities, special needs and child protection. Improvements have been made to the security of the building, though issues remain about door security inside.

At the last nursery education inspection, three key issues were identified. A basic action plan was devised at the time to show how these were being met. The assessment process shows links to the stepping stones and this is used to help inform planning. However this area requires further clarity and development. In general, funded children receive an improved balance of educational opportunities throughout the week, though this is not always consistent. Parents are informed of their child's progress and informally involved in the assessment process. However, although requested, there is no effective system in place to use information from parents in relation to what they know about their child, enabling them to fully contribute to their child's assessment.

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.

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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):

- improve access to drinking water throughout the session for all children
- ensure children are not able to access garden waste and bonfire debris in the outdoor play area
- ensure planning and assessment is in place to identify and meet the needs of the two-year-old children
- ensure a rigorous recruitment process is in place to help ensure the suitability of staff and include checks regarding their medical suitability
- keep Ofsted fully informed of changes to the committee to ensure suitability checks are completed

- improve security to the rooms used by the children to prevent other users of the building entering without staff supervision or knowledge.

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 children are able to experience the same skills and challenges throughout the week, irrespective of their days of attendance
- continue to develop involvement with parents, encouraging their contributions to the assessment profiles and in supporting their own child's learning needs at home
- continue to develop planning systems to ensure they are clear and meet individual children's learning needs.

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