

# Park Road Under Fives

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109475
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 July 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Sue Taylor
<b>Setting Address</b>	Upper Park Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN37 6SJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 443030
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<b>Registered person</b>	Park Road Methodist Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Park Road Under Fives playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school and members of the local community. It opened in 1985 and operates from the church hall, with additional use of two other rooms. It is situated within easy walking distance to shops, schools and parks.

A maximum of 28 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The group is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 09:15 to 15:30, and Fridays from 09:15 until 13:00, for 38 weeks of the year. Children share access to a small enclosed outdoor play area; the group also use the local park.

There are currently 44 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 35 children receive funding for early education. Children generally come from the local area. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup employs 10 members of staff. Of these, the supervisor has a teaching certificate, two staff members hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in clean and airy premises. Staff follow satisfactory daily routines that help keep children healthy, such as wiping tables down before snack time and wearing disposable gloves for nappy changes. Children wash their hands before eating and after the toilet, using liquid soap and paper towels that help prevent cross contamination. However, the practice of children using a communal towel, with a bowl of soapy water, after messy play is less effective. The process for administering medication is shared with parents, who are made aware of the need to provide written consent. This helps ensure children receive the correct dosage. Parents are informed of the pre-school's policy for sun safety. The group are considering more effective practices to ensure children are kept safe, when out in the sun.

To promote the availability of drinking water throughout the session, the group are introducing water bottles. This helps ensure children have control over their thirst and improves on the current method. Children have a very healthy snack. This varies daily and includes various fresh fruits or raw vegetables, such as cherries, bananas, apples and carrots. The staff group work with parents to encourage healthy packed lunches. Parents are informed there is no cold storage for packed lunches and suggestions are made to help prevent food spoiling.

The children's physical development is promoted with a range of activities. The children who stay for lunch enjoy the daily walk in the local park. The activity varies and includes feeding the ducks, chasing bubbles, using the swings and climbing frame. There are fun resources for indoor activities that help children gain skills in balancing and control. Children's fine motor skills develop as they use equipment such as scissors and pencils or manipulate different materials. This also helps with their hand-eye coordination. The warm and caring relationships that the children form with the staff supports their emotional well being.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

During the session the premises are secure with a doorbell for visitors to use. There are effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. The staff supervise the children well. As a result, staff are always aware of which children and staff are in the smaller side room and ensure children are not going up the stairs. The door that leads to the toilet area is gated so that staff know who is out of the room. The door to the kitchen is not secured, although it is kept closed and there are safety catches on some kitchen cupboards containing chemicals. This helps minimise the risk to children but it does remain accessible.

When taking the children out, the staff follow good procedures that keep children safe. The children wear visibility tabards and use wrist straps. The children learn about keeping themselves safe as they learn how to cross roads safely. The staff remind children to be aware of possible hazards, such as dogs and stinging nettles.

There are good quality resources that are safe and age appropriate. The staff set the room out with a wide choice of play materials and activities, that children can access easily. The room is set up in a way that allows children to make free choices about their play.

The supervisor ensures new staff members read the child protection policy. This includes the procedures to be followed if any allegations are made against staff or volunteers. Generally,

the staff have an acceptable knowledge and understanding of their role, although no staff member has undertaken any specific training recently.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happy and settle quickly. They are able to make choices about their play and are invited to take part in a small group session in the side room. This is a useful time where the quieter child can feel able to speak up. The good staff to child ratio enables some one to one attention, throughout the day. Each child has a named keyworker who maintains a record of their progress, based on observations made as they play. Development records for each child, in line with the Birth to Three matters framework, are in place. However, the quality of the detail recorded varies. The planning overall is not clear on meeting the needs of individual children and focuses on the Foundation Stage areas of learning for the older children. All children benefit from the good range of interesting and fun resources.

#### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children are interested in the activities and spend time concentrating on their self-chosen play. Most staff are good at motivating children by introducing activities with enthusiasm and joining in with their play. Some of the staff group have a clear understanding of how children develop and how they can extend their learning as they play. Other staff are gaining knowledge through training courses and from the support on offer.

Staff ask questions of children as they play, getting them to think and talk about their thoughts and ideas. However, there are times when opportunities to extend or reinforce children's learning are missed. Staff make written observations as children play and pass these to the relevant keyworker. These are then used to complete the profiles showing children's progress to the early learning goals. Not all profiles have detail that explains how a child met a stepping stone and some aspects have no evidence noted, although children are making progress. This limits the usefulness of the record. The planning ensures that all areas of learning are covered. However, although the short term plans show a stepping stone as the intended learning, this does not necessarily match where the children are in their learning. As a result, children's individual learning needs are not effectively planned for. Children's progress relies on the individual knowledge that keyworkers and other staff have.

The children enjoy their time at the playgroup and benefit from the activities. A strength of the group is with the children's personal, social and emotional development. They develop good relationships with staff and positive friendships with other children. They are caring and actively involve other children in their play. They benefit from the choices they make about their play. Some play well on their own or with friends, although they do enjoy adult participation. Most children are confident communicators; keen to chat about their lives and what they are doing. The older children learn letter sounds and some are beginning to write recognisable letter shapes. All children have easy access to pens and paper, and use them in the role play area.

Children count to five easily, with understanding. They use mathematical language as they play with the rice and different sized containers. For example, talking about whether their tube has more or less than another child's. They learn about simple calculation through action songs, such as Five Flying Spacemen. Some of the older children are beginning to recognise numerals

and add groups of objects together, with confidence. They like puzzles and making patterns with the peg boards.

Some activities encourage children to explore. For example, they have great fun as they see what happens when they add water to flour. The member of staff extends the activity as other ingredients are added. Not all staff are asking good open questions or getting children to explore their experiences using all of their senses. There are no natural or unusual items that children can investigate. They gain a sense of time as they watch frog spawn turn into tadpoles or plant cress and sun flowers to grow at home.

Children use their imagination well as they play. They use the resources to support their play. For example, children rearrange the physical play equipment to create a small obstacle course of their own. They explore a range of media such as shaving foam, soil, rice or soap flake slime. They have free access to scissors, sellotape, glue and some materials to create their own models and pictures.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

The staff obtain relevant information to ensure that children's individual needs are met. There is a trained special educational needs coordinator who ensures that the children, who require specific support, are fully included. She is confident in her role and involves parents and other agencies appropriately. Children develop self-esteem and confidence as they make choices, assisted by the positive relationships they have with the staff. There are resources that positively reflect the wider world but these are not always accessible. This limits children's growing awareness of and the acceptance of differences.

Staff manage children's behaviour effectively. They spend time talking to children to gain their cooperation. They use lots of praise and encouragement and most children respond willingly. The majority of the children help tidy up and happily share toys. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents and carers are welcomed into the playgroup. They are able to help out at a session or join the committee. They know who their child's keyworker is and can arrange to talk to them in depth if they wish. They receive regular newsletters that keeps them informed about events at the group. They have easy access to the pre-school's policies and procedures. However, the complaints process is not in line with recent changes to the registration requirements. This is a breach of a required regulation.

Partnership with parents of nursery education children is satisfactory. They are provided with some detail about the Foundation Stage that outlines what children are expected to learn and how they will learn. This ensures parents understand that play has an important role in developing their children's skills. There is no formal process in place where assessment progress records are shared, although they are aware they can view them at any time. Parents are not routinely contributing to the records. They receive some ideas on how they can support their child's learning at home. However, these rarely relate to their child's individual learning needs.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The group benefits from a supportive committee. The recruitment process helps ensure the suitability of staff. An informal induction provides new staff with detail of appropriate policies and routines. The required records are available. However, the register does not fully provide a clear and accurate record of children's attendance and the medication record does not include the time medication is administered.

Staff are aware that unvetted persons are not to be let alone with children. Good staffing ratios are maintained and overall staff work directly with the children. Generally, the children are well grouped. For example, having a separate circle time for the younger children means that activities, such as story time, meet children's developmental needs.

The staff are committed to developing their practice and knowledge. Appraisals are held regularly and individual training needs identified. Training is encouraged and as a result the group are working to meet the qualified staff ratio of 50%. The group are aware of their strengths and areas to be improved. In general, they integrate 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 since the last care inspection. As requested the recruitment procedures now include a health declaration. This helps ensure the overall suitability of staff. Training programmes were completed to meet the staff qualification requirements. However, due to staff changes this is an ongoing issue, although the situation has improved. The child protection policy has been amended to ensure it meets the regulation and helps safeguard children's welfare.

At the last nursery education inspection, the playgroup were asked to improve the planning and assessment systems. Changes have been made in that the assessment system shows individual children's progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. However, this information is not used effectively to inform future planning. As a result, planning does not effectively show how all children are challenged or supported as appropriate to their individual needs.

## **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):

- consider improving hand washing facilities after messy play
- develop planning in line with the Birth to three matters framework, taking account of children's individual needs
- ensure the register accurately reflects children's attendance and that the time, when medication is administered, is added to the relevant record
- ensure that the complaints policy reflects the current regulatory guidelines

### **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 the assessment system to clearly identify a child's next steps in their learning and use this to inform planning, showing links to the stepping stones that meet the individual learning needs of children and ensures that all aspects are covered
- encourage parental involvement in contributing to progress records and supporting individual learning needs at home (also applies to care)
- continue to develop staff's familiarity with the Foundation Stage and knowledge of how they can support children's individual learning needs during everyday routines and activities

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