

North Romford Community Association Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	118553
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Inspector	Lynn Amelia Hartigan
Setting Address	North Romford Community Centre, Clockhouse Lane, Collier Row, Romford, Essex, RM5 3QJ
Telephone number	01708 766308
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Registered person	North Romford Community Association
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

North Romford Community Association Playgroup is run by a committee and managed by a supervisor. It opened in 1970 and operates from one large room within the community centre. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. The playgroup is open from 09.30 to 12.00 noon, five days a week, term time only.

There are currently 19 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 11 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The playgroup employs four staff of whom two hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted as the playgroup staff take steps to maintain a clean and healthy environment for children to play in. Children are encouraged and supported to take responsibility

for meeting their own personal needs, however children are not able to independently use the bathroom due to the layout of the building. Vigilant staff escort the children to the bathroom and children are then able to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene. Liquid soap and a hand dryer is available to assist hand washing. A satisfactory nappy changing procedure in place ensures children are protected from cross-infection.

Children's accidents are minimised because staff carry out risk assessments. All staff members are currently updating their first aid training, therefore children are protected and appropriately cared for if they have an accident. In addition, children are protected and appropriately cared for if they have an accident through the provision of a first aid box that is easily available. Accident and medication books are satisfactorily maintained and are confidential. Information is recorded regarding children's medical needs with instructions from the parents, ensuring they are cared for appropriately. Children's dietary needs and allergies are also recorded. The playgroup has introduced a nutritious and healthy snack menu and children are provided with regular drinks, as water is readily available within the playroom. Parents are informed verbally as to what their children have eaten and a snack menu is also displayed on the parents' notice board. Children sit together at snack time and enjoy ample snacks at their own pace. Snacks such as melon, grapes, cucumber and cheese and ham slices are offered. Children are beginning to take some responsibility for their snack time, for example shopping in the local supermarket for the fruit and washing their own plates and cups when they have finished.

Children move around indoors carefully, they play within one main playroom. There is little opportunity available to free-flow from indoors and outdoors, mainly due to the layout of the building. Opportunities for children to use the outdoor environment is also limited. However, a large garden is available and used well within the summer months. Children are able to develop some physical skills as staff provide activities such as using the parachute, children squeal with delight when running under it. They have fun using the bats and balls and hoops. Children are keen and excited when preparing to go outdoors, they walk with enthusiasm in the local environment to observe blossom on the trees and they run excitedly in the garden. Some opportunity is available for children to use malleable materials such as dough and shaving foam but their physical development could be compromised as opportunities for climbing, ride-on toys and balancing are limited.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment that is safely maintained because the staff ensure the premises are welcoming to both children and their parents. Staff use notice boards to display some useful information for parents. There are some cosy and defined areas such as a cosy book area and a home corner. Children are kept safe because staff ensure visitors show identification and sign the visitors book. The playroom doors are bolted to ensure security once parents have left and good management of the doors by the staff ensures the children's safety. Children use a balanced range of safe and suitable equipment with some resources stored at a low-level, to promote children's independence as they self-select toys. Resources are of good quality.

Staff are aware of their roles and where they should be deployed and children begin to understand the importance of staying safe. For example, through their involvement in practising regular fire drills which are recorded. However, the storage of chairs within the playroom compromises the children's safety as they are stacked too high. Children are safeguarded from harm because their well-being is cared for by staff who understand their responsibilities with

regard to child protection. A written policy is in place that underpins their practice. However, children's safety could be compromised because the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection or any staff member have attended recent safeguarding training. In addition there is not a robust written policy and procedure in place with regard to recruitment, vetting and suitability.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children appear happy, confident and independent. They chat and play happily together. They enjoy using the mobile phones in the home corner arranging tea parties. They appear comfortable with visitors within the playroom and freely chat to them. Good staff management of new children attending ensures they are managed well, enabling them to settle quickly. Staff are sensitive to children's needs and are extremely caring. The use of children's comforters are encouraged and welcomed to help children settle. Children's individual needs are met as the staff are fully informed regarding their needs, following consultation with their parents.

Activities are prepared ready for the children's arrival. Children happily engage in an activity of their choice such as washing the dolls or playing in the home corner. The playroom is decorated with some of the children's artwork and some posters. A cosy book corner is now available and children clearly enjoy using the books and having stories, staff are on hand to read to the children on request. The sessions are varied and support children in their play and as a result their behaviour is good. They have formed warm relationships with the staff who are intuitive of their needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Most staff demonstrate a very basic knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Observation and assessment records are now available but are basic and do not always satisfactorily evaluate children's development. Written observations do not always inform the next stages of learning and very little extension or challenge is offered. Occasionally staff extend the children's thoughts or learning through discussion. For example, children decide to add water to the sand or write letters in the shaving foam, but staff do not prompt discussions or ask open ended questions therefore children lack opportunities to think for themselves. Occasional opportunity is available for children to self-select resources and make decisions about their play, however most activities are pre-determined leaving little opportunity for children to develop their imagination and creativity. Limited opportunities are available to children to work in the outdoor environment or using communication technology and planning does not take into account these activities, therefore children have little opportunity to explore and investigate.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing good relationships with adults and other children in the playgroup and it is evident that the children feel confident and secure with staff. Staff use several means of communication when working with parents and carers to meet children's individual needs such as registration forms. Children have some opportunities to make choices that contributes to the children developing self-esteem and respect for others.

Limited resources and positive images of diversity prevent children from learning and understanding about individuality. They learn about some traditional days, such as Mother's day, Easter and Christmas, that are included in the curriculum planning. Festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year are also acknowledged.

Children's needs are supported as staff follow written policies with regard to learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, children who may require additional support would be compromised as the designated Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) has not completed training. Staff do ensure that activities are adapted to enable all children to participate and children understand about responsible behaviour and are learning about boundaries. Staff deal with behaviour consistently and calmly, staff speak respectfully to the children and are good role models, as a result the children's behaviour is good. Children develop self-esteem and respect for others by learning social skills. For example, helping each other at snack time and when tidying up.

Parents are given some information in a variety of formats, which includes newsletters, an information board and verbal communications. Staff are friendly and approachable. Children settle well because an effective settling-in process is in place. A satisfactory complaints policy is available however, this needs reviewing to ensure parents are provided with up-to date information. Discussions with parents indicate that they are happy with most aspects of the setting and that staff are friendly and approachable.

The partnership with parents and carers is inadequate. Parents are provided with some information about aspects of their children's learning, with regard to the six areas of learning, as this is detailed within the prospectus. There are some suggestions made to parents within newsletters as to how parents can support their children at home although this is not consistent. As a result, not all parents are aware of their child's development records, assessments or how their children are developing. Staff discuss with parents their child informally and a key-worker system is in place. Parents are unaware of the planning displayed on the wall and are not fully informed as to what the children have done or what they have learned.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children clearly know the difference from right and wrong and their behaviour is good. Staff are good role models who value and respect children and their individuality.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children appear happy and settled. Children experience stability and consistency as the staff have attended the playgroup for many years. Some staff members are committed to providing quality care and express an interest to keep up-to-date with current practice through training where possible. There is adequate deployment of staff at all sessions and it is evident that most staff members are aware of what is expected from them. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and support each other well. All members of staff demonstrate a good standard of professionalism at all times and are friendly and approachable. All appropriate documents are in place.

Leadership and management is inadequate. The manager is hands-on and part of the team. However there is not a clear vision for future developments for the playgroup and there is no formal monitoring of staff such as appraisals. Staff development such as training is not positively

encouraged and the lack of qualified staff has a negative impact on the playgroup. There is no formal system to evaluate the quality of education delivered.

Overall, children's needs are not met

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to; ensure children's hygiene practices were improved. Children now wash their hands before snacks, after visiting the bathroom and if they have played outdoors. Liquid soap and wipes are used. The staff also agreed to provide children with nutritious snacks. A healthy and nutritious snack menu is now in place and children enjoy a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The provider agreed to; ensure that staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage was developed enabling them to provide children with more challenge, opportunities for imaginative play, dance and music and to develop children's gross motor skills. The provider was also asked to ensure that children had regular access to programmable toys and communication technology and to ensure the extension of activities helping children link sounds and letters. Little progress has been made in most of these areas. However, some staff have attended training. Dance, music and movement and some opportunities for climbing and balancing are now included within the planning. These issues have been raised again following the inspection and have contributed to an inadequate judgement for nursery education.

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 complaint 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):

- ensure staff attend training with regard to safeguarding children and that the child protection and complaints policies are regularly reviewed. Ensure a robust policy and procedure with regard to recruitment, vetting and suitability is in place
- ensure the premises are made safe (this refers to the stacking of adult chairs within the playroom)

- ensure resources and positive images are regularly available to children. Provide opportunities to acknowledge different festivals within the planning, enabling children to learn and understand about diversity. Ensure a designated SENCO is identified and training is completed.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- devise and implement an action plan to improve staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn, keep records of staff training and development. Ensure that planning supports and challenges all children effectively in all areas of learning
- ensure that parents are fully informed regarding their child's developmental progress. Develop more opportunities for parents to support their children's learning at home and contribute to their children's development record.
- ensure resources are in place to allow children to self-select and develop their play and learning in all six areas

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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