

The Grove Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	139370
Inspection date	25 September 2007
Inspector	Dinah Round
Setting Address	The Bungalow, Damers Road, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 2LA
Telephone number	01305 266766
E-mail	
Registered person	The Grove Pre-School Playgroup Committee
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 Grove Pre-school Playgroup was established in 1984, and moved to its present accommodation in 1998. It is a community playgroup managed by a parent committee. The group operates from a converted bungalow, adjacent to the Damers First school, situated on the outskirts of the town of Dorchester, in Dorset. They are the sole user of the building. Children have use of a playroom with separate entrance hall, and adjoining toilets and kitchen area. There is an enclosed outside play area that surrounds the building with static climbing equipment for outdoor play activities. The playgroup also have use of the school playground.

The playgroup is registered to care for 20 children aged from two to five years of age. Children are offered a maximum of three sessions a week, and there are currently a total of 50 children on role. Of these, 38 children are receiving government funding for nursery education. The playgroup welcomes children who have learning difficulties and disabilities and children who have English as an additional language. The playgroup is open each weekday during term time from 09:00-15.30pm, which includes morning and afternoon sessions and a lunch club.

A team of six members of staff work with the children. Of these, four have a childcare qualification, others are experienced in early years or are currently undertaking training. The group receive support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. Staff follow good hygiene procedures, surfaces are kept clean, disposable gloves are used for nappy changing, and paper towels and disposable tissues are provided. This ensures that children are well protected from the risk of cross-infection. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through the effective daily routines, and are developing independence in using the facilities provided. Children have a clear understanding why they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. All staff are currently updating their first aid training, and detailed accident and medication records are maintained and shared with parents.

Children are gaining a good awareness of healthy eating through different topics and discussion. They enjoy a sociable snack time, staff sit and talk about healthy foods and the children's individual likes and dislikes. Children benefit from the nutritious snacks provided, such as bread, fresh fruit and vegetables. Children have sufficient fluids, as drinks are provided at snack time and they can ask for more. However, they are not able to increase their fluid intake by helping themselves to drinking water during the session. Children's individual dietary needs are clearly recorded and carefully followed by staff to make sure they remain healthy.

Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills through daily use of the outdoor play space. They enjoy using the large play equipment to climb, slide and balance, and also push and pedal a selection of wheeled toys. This helps to promote their physical development and co-ordination. Children use a wide range of small equipment, such as scissors and rollers with the playdough, pens and paintbrushes, developing good control of their small physical movements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. The effective security arrangements and procedures followed by staff means that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised. For example, the external door is kept secure, and staff closely supervise children during arrival and collection times. Staff maintain good levels of supervision to ensure children can play safely. Annual risk assessments are carried out to identify hazards and minimise risks to children, although, this is not extended to include trips and outings. Termly fire evacuation procedures are practised, so that children and staff know the procedures.

Children move around the room freely and with confidence as they choose their activities. They are provided with a good variety of toys and resources which are appropriate for their age and of good quality. Equipment is thoughtfully organised to enable easy access, such as the toilet and hand basin positioned at the children's level. Children learn how to keep themselves and others safe during their play through the gentle reminders given by the staff. For example, staff remind children not to throw the spade as it might hurt someone, and to have 'gentle hands' when playing together .

Staff have a secure knowledge of child protection issues and procedures, as they continue to update their knowledge through regular training. They are clear of the responsibility to safeguard children, and detailed records are maintained of any persons authorised to collect the children. A child protection policy is in place, but lacks details regarding procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are keen to come to playgroup and quickly get involved in the different activities and play opportunities available. They have positive relationships with adults and each other, and staff provide good support for the younger or less confident children to help them settle. This makes children feel happy and secure. Children are starting to develop independence as they attend to their own personal hygiene. Children are provided with a broad range of interesting and enjoyable activities, which promote learning in all areas of development. Staff know the children well, they interact in a friendly and caring manner, talking and listening to children to help them learn. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to monitor younger children's progress and development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use their secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan a broad range of stimulating and fun learning experiences. Planning is clearly linked to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and includes topics, such as 'colours' and 'travelling'. All areas of learning are covered and offer a good balance of both free play and adult-led activities, successfully incorporating both indoor and outdoor play opportunities. Staff motivate children so they are keen to learn and try new experiences, using effective questioning to challenge their thinking. For example, children are fascinated as they explore which items collected from the garden will float or sink in water outside. However, the full opportunities to develop children's independence within the activities and routines is not always explored. Children's achievements and development is regularly monitored through on-going observations and assessments. Staff use these to complete children's progress records which are linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Children are confident and motivated to learn, quickly settling into their chosen activity as they arrive at playgroup. Children communicate well, happily chatting and sharing their experiences with others. Staff talk about the 'jumpy fish' and 'stripy orange tiger', and children have fun as they join in the different rhymes and songs with excitement. Children frequently select books from the well stocked resources, and listen with enjoyment to the group story 'I don't want to go to bed'. Children have good opportunities to make marks and write for a range of purposes, such as in role play or to write their names on their paintings. Children join in number rhymes and start to learn about shapes, size and measure through planned activities and experiences. Children see written numerals around the room and are introduced to number through planned activities. However, the full opportunities to spontaneously introduce number and counting within the routines and activities are not always maximised.

Children have very good opportunities to explore and investigate through hands-on experiences. They show great excitement as they hunt for insects outside, commenting 'I've found some' and 'I'm being careful with it', as they proudly show off the slug, woodlice or snail they have collected in their bug box. Children have access to a range of technology equipment, such as cameras, telephones, and a microwave in the role play. They learn about their community

through various local outings and visitors coming in to the group, such as a policeman and fire fighter. Children use their imagination well as they engage in role play, enjoying dressing up and acting out different experiences. Children regularly use their senses to explore through the wide range of activities. They feel the different textures on the playdough, and learn about colours as they mix paints together to create 'orange' for their tiger masks.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very settled in the friendly and caring environment. Photographs and colourful displays of children's artwork in the room promotes a strong sense of belonging to the group. Children take turns to have 'Bubbles' and 'Tamba' the pre-school toys overnight, and relay the visit to others the next day. Staff are sensitive to the children's individual needs and adapt the environment to make sure they are able to fully participate in all the activities. The Special Education Needs Co-ordinator regularly attends training to update her knowledge and is clear of her role. Staff identify when children need additional support and liaise closely with parents and other professionals, so they work together to meet the children's needs. Children's individual achievements are acknowledged which makes them feel good about themselves. Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered.

Children are developing a very good awareness of other cultures and ways of life through planned topics, activities and resources. They celebrate a wide range of festivals, such as, Chinese New Year and Divali, and when an African musician and storyteller visited the group they played different musical instruments. Children take part in national fund raising events, such as, 'Jeans for Genes' and get involved in community events as they join in Dorchester Carnival. Children are learning some basic sign language through the visual aids and symbols around the room, and use sign-a-long with their 'Hello' song at the beginning of the session. This helps raise their awareness of the needs of others.

Children's behaviour is very good. They are given clear and consistent boundaries through the staff's use of simple rules, which are also displayed in the playgroup. Children know the routine and settle quickly for the group story, staff skilfully remind them to listen and use their 'eyes, ears and smiles'. Staff provide good role models for children by being calm and polite, which helps children learn to have respect and consideration for others. Children benefit from the staff's regular praise and encouragement which builds their confidence and self-esteem.

Partnerships with parents and carers is outstanding. There are excellent systems in place to keep parents informed about the provision. This includes comprehensive information via the parent's folder including the group's policies and procedures, photographs and regular newsletters. Parents are kept up to date with weekly activities through the simple posters detailing the topics and activities. Daily opportunities for parents to talk with their child's key worker effectively shares information about their child's on-going care and welfare. Children's development is successfully shared with parents, the manager talks to them individually to explain and discuss their child's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child, and actively encouraged to get involved in the group by helping with fund raising or being on the parents rota.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a bright, welcoming child-friendly environment. Space is used effectively to meet children's needs, with sessions offering a good balance of both adult led and free play activities. Children enjoy a broad range of play opportunities and experiences with the outdoor area being very well used to extend their learning; although, opportunities to fully promote children's independence is not always maximised. Children are cared for by a small team of qualified, experienced and committed staff. The effective key worker system ensures that the children's individual needs are followed, and they receive good support. The playgroup meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities within the group and work together very well as a team. They meet weekly to discuss children's individual needs and plan the following weeks activities. The manager is very knowledgeable and supports the staff's development through regular discussions and annual appraisals. Staff frequently attend training to update their knowledge which contributes towards the children's welfare and development. The systems to monitor and evaluate the provision are not yet fully developed. The group enjoy strong links with local schools which helps children's transition as they move on to school.

Documentation is well organised and kept secure and confidential. Policies and procedures are in place to support the running of the provision, although, the complaints procedure and child protection policy lack some details. Clear recruitment and vetting procedures are followed to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Records are generally clearly recorded, with most aspects sufficiently detailed.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group agreed to monitor children's arrival at the premises and ensure the kitchen is made safe or inaccessible to children. A member of staff now monitors the arrival and collection of children at the sessions, and maintains the particular register for that session. Children are taught not to go into the kitchen, and locks are fitted on low cupboards with all hot drinks now kept well away from children to ensure their safety.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection the group agreed to provide regular opportunities both planned and spontaneous, for children to recognise and write numbers, and to calculate. Staff have developed planning further to include a focus on mathematics, however, mathematics is not always used spontaneously within the session. The group also agreed to develop planning to include extension activities and additional challenges for more able children, in particular in letter recognition, writing opportunities and physical play. Staff now adapt the activities to provide appropriate challenges for more able children, and children now take part in self-registration to help letter recognition.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made to 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 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):

- make resources more easily accessible, so children can easily access a drink when they are thirsty
- develop further the risk assessment, register and fire drill records, and update policies and procedures, in particular the complaints procedures and child protection policy

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):

- increase the opportunities for children to develop their independence through the routines and activities, and incorporate more opportunities for children to use mathematics spontaneously in their play and within everyday routines
- continue to develop systems to evaluate the provision and activities.

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