

Weymouth St Playschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	145872
Inspection date	09 October 2007
Inspector	Catherine Louise Sample
Setting Address	Christchurch Hall, Upper Marsh Road, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 9PG
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Weymouth St Playschool
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 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?

Weymouth St Playschool was established more than thirty years ago and operates from Christchurch Hall in Warminster. Children play in the main hall with access to a side room for small group activities. There is independent access to toilets and children have access to an outdoor play area. The playschool is open during school term times from 08:50 to 11:45 Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 08:50 to 14:45 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The playschool is registered to care for up to 26 children from two years to under five years. There are currently 33 children on roll. Of these, 18 are in receipt of nursery funding. There are currently no children with learning difficulties and /or disabilities and no children who use English as an additional language.

The committee employs five staff, of whom three hold relevant qualifications. The playschool is supported by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning about good hygiene practice. There are photographs displayed of children washing their hands as part of their daily routine. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating and staff are careful to remind them to do so. Staff also remind them to cover their mouths when coughing so that they don't spread germs. Children's hygiene needs are met through appropriate measures. They use paper towels to dry their hands to prevent cross infection. The tables are cleaned before children eat at them and kitchen worktops are cleaned in preparation for a cooking activity.

Children have sufficiently healthy food and drink. They have free access to drinking water throughout the day and usually have milk to drink at snack time unless the parents have sent in an alternative. They have biscuits and fruit at snack time. They bring packed lunches two days a week. These are stored appropriately in the kitchen. Staff offer advice to parents about suitable contents for lunchboxes although this is not always followed. Children are learning about healthy eating through topic work and discussion with staff.

Children are protected appropriately from illness and infection. There is a sickness policy in place which includes a 24 hour exclusion period for sickness and diarrhoea and exclusion periods for other common childhood illnesses. Children are helped to keep fit through regular exercise. They take part in aerobics sessions and use a variety of apparatus including a slide and a balance beam.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning about how to stay safe. They talk about why they must walk and not run and found out about fire safety when they visited the fire station. Staff remind them of their personal safety. They explain that they should sit down when going down the slide and sit properly on their chairs so that they don't fall off.

Children can generally move about the setting safely. Positive safety measures include covering all electrical sockets and keeping the front door locked at all times. Children take part in regular fire drills and there is appropriate fire fighting equipment. Staff are vigilant. They ensure that children use the slide safely and check on children that have gone to the toilets by themselves. However, a full risk assessment of the premises had not been made since 1999 and this had not been reviewed until the inspection. Changes have taken place within the building in that time which may have affected children's safety. Children's safety outside is ensured by closing the gates if they are using the grassed area outside the hall. Outings are always risk assessed and parents are asked to help so that a 1:2 ratio of adults to children is maintained.

Children's welfare is protected through the staff's appropriate understanding of child protection issues. They are aware of the possible indicators of abuse such as changes in children's behaviour and know that they must report their concerns to the supervisor. She would then discuss the concerns with the parents where appropriate and make a referral to the Local Safeguarding Children Board if necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident. They move from activity to activity by themselves and are proud of their achievements. Praise by staff helps to boost children's self esteem and adults give children appropriate levels of support. Children are learning some independent skills such as toileting. However, there are often occasions when staff do not fully encourage children's independence. For example, staff put on children's coats for them and collect the children's rubbish from them at lunchtime.

Children have sufficient opportunities to make choices. There is a wide range of toys and equipment which is put out on a rota. Children can choose from what is already out but cannot choose from the whole range of toys since the building has other users. This restricts the way in which resources can be stored. Children do have the opportunity to identify what toys they would like to be put out in the afternoons when the group opens for the whole day. Children benefit from a range of appropriate activities. They enjoy planting cress seeds and making cakes. Sessions are sometimes planned to allow small group work with older or younger children. Most of the time children are together in one large group. This can lead to unrealistic expectations of the younger children. For example, they have to join a long queue to go on the slide and sit still during story time. Staff's planning shows how the activities link to the Birth to three matters framework. However, the main planning that is displayed for parents does not show how the needs of younger children are planned for.

Nursery Education.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. They show interest in new activities such as weighing and measuring and most can focus on an activity such as listening to a story. They have good self esteem and proudly show off their work. They have friendly relationships with one another and seek out others to sit with at snack time. They are well behaved. They take turns and share and know the golden rules. They are learning some independent skills such as handing round the snacks but they are not sufficiently encouraged in this area. They are developing a sense of community by using resources that reflect positive images of diversity and celebrating festivals from around the world. Some children use language confidently. They talk to adults about what they are doing and share news from home. They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books but have limited opportunities to recognise their names for practical purposes. They have appropriate opportunities to link sounds and letters and to experiment with early writing skills. Some more able children are starting to use writing to record data and several can write their own names.

Children have regular opportunities to use musical instruments and explore sound with a music teacher. They use their imaginations in role play as they dress up to go to a wedding and hand round pretend ice creams. They enjoy mixing colours and have daily access to some form of art materials, such as paints. However, they do not have the opportunity to freely experiment with a wide range of media at any one time which restricts their creativity. Children are exploring and investigating the natural world. They plant bulbs and seeds and there are displays showing the lifecycle of frogs and plants. They have frequent opportunities to use a variety of construction materials including junk modelling. They use various information and computer technology including a CD player and programmable toys. They talk about their homes and families and the places that they live.

Children have lots of opportunities to count. Staff encourage counting in a variety of activities such as singing number rhymes and counting the animals when looking at a book. Children are beginning to recognise numerals and use their fingers to count. They use numbers in their play and talk about size, shape and weight during activities such as being weighed and measured. They do some simple calculation such as working out how many items they have after adding more but they have few opportunities to solve practical number problems. Children use a variety of equipment to enhance their physical development. For example, they use steps, rockers, climbing frames and balance bars to develop their gross motor skills. They also use tools such as play dough cutters which require good hand-eye coordination. They do not have frequent access to scissors but do use them during planned activities. They are becoming aware of their bodies as they talk about healthy eating and have a visit from a dental nurse.

Children's education is enhanced by having staff who are aware of the Foundation Stage of learning and who are able to identify what children can learn from various activities. They are able to challenge children appropriately and use generally effective teaching methods to help children think for themselves. All staff record observations of the children's progress and this information is transferred to the children's records of achievement. These are used to identify the next steps for each child and all staff are encouraged to make themselves aware of these. Staff contribute to planning which is closely linked to the early learning goals. Activity plans are used for structured activities. These show some differentiation for different age groups and levels of ability but do not identify individual children and the next steps that they need to take.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children contribute to the setting by helping to tidy away before snack time and deciding some of the activities that should be on offer for the afternoon session. They have made links with the local community. Children have a Harvest Festival celebration with a representative from the local church and make regular trips to the local school. They have positive relationships with one another. They seek out friends to hold hands and sit with at snack time.

Children are well behaved. They know the golden rules which are clearly displayed and can share and take turns. For example, they take turns on the trampoline and do not mind getting off when it is someone else's turn. Staff remind them to say thank you at snack time and acknowledge good behaviour. They use consistent strategies to manage children's behaviour. These include explaining why the behaviour is unacceptable and giving the child a quiet time to think about what they have done.

Children are learning about wider society. They use a variety of resources that promote diversity including dolls, foreign play food, books and puzzles. They are also learning through celebrating festivals such as Chinese New Year and through doing topics about different countries. Children are encouraged to play with all resources irrespective of their gender. For example, girls dress up as police officers. There are currently no children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending the group. There is, however, a trained special needs coordinator who has some previous experience of caring for children with additional needs and who has good links with the area coordinator.

Children benefit from a generally effective working relationship between the parents and staff. Parents receive regular newsletters and there is a small notice board to keep them informed. There is a brief prospectus that all parents receive and a full policy document which is available

to those that want to read it. Planning is displayed so that parents are made aware of what the children are learning. However, they receive little information about planning for younger children and the Birth to three matters framework.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are aware of the Foundation Stage of learning although some receive more information about it than others. Most parents find staff approachable and available to discuss any issues. They know that they can ask to see their children's records. They attend regular open mornings to see these records and discuss the children's progress with their key workers. Parents are made aware of the topics that the children are doing and encouraged to contribute to these in some way. Staff are planning to give parents more specific advice about how to extend their children's learning at home at the next open morning. Parents do not have the opportunity to contribute what they know about what their child can already do when they start nursery education. This means that they do not contribute to their child's baseline assessment on starting funded education.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from an appropriately organised environment. They use a large hall which is currently undergoing refurbishment and also have use of an adjacent room for small group work. There is child sized furniture and some displays of children's work which help to give the premises a welcoming atmosphere. There is a small grassed area outside which children can use when the weather is good.

Children's safety is enhanced through having suitable staff. All staff have been vetted and there are appropriate procedures to ensure suitability such as following up references and an annual appraisal system. There are three trained staff working with children and several staff have many years of experience working in the setting. Staff regularly attend training to update their skills and knowledge.

Children's welfare is promoted through the keeping of most of the necessary records, policies and procedures. The group has standard policies and procedures including those for lost or uncollected children and for parents wishing to make a complaint. Staff keep accurate records of accidents and medication administered. They also record incidents although these are not always signed by the parents. Parents currently give written permission for their children to be put into an ambulance rather than permission for staff to seek emergency medical advice and /or treatment. Ofsted's contact details are given in the full policy document but this is not available to all parents.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Several of the staff have worked together for many years and, as a result, work well as a team. There are clear responsibilities for members of staff and they take turns doing tasks such as reading to the children. There is a full staff meeting every half term as well as more informal meetings on an ongoing basis. Staff's continuing suitability is ensured by an annual appraisal system although there is some confusion over who should carry out the appraisal for the supervisor. The staff have strong links with the committee. The chair comes in to help at the playschool and produces the newsletter so she is aware of what the children are doing and of any issues with parents. Staff evaluate planning and use this information to adapt future planning. The manager monitors the success of the educational provision by checking that all areas of learning are fully covered. She has also

completed a self evaluation produced by the Early Years partnership. This enables her to identify strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

Overall the provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was required to develop activities to help children learn about diversity and to review the grouping of children of different ages. It was also recommended that the provider review the storage of staff documentation and improve the special needs policy and staff's understanding of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The provider has developed activities to help children learn about wider society. They celebrate festivals and regularly use resources, such as books and puzzles, that show positive images of diversity. These measures have enhanced children's learning. The grouping of children has been reviewed. Staff use a small room off the main hall to do small group work with older or younger children. Some activities, however, still need review since expectations of the younger children are sometimes too high. This area remains an issue. The special needs policy has been reviewed fully. It now refers to the code of practice. Staff have developed their understanding of how to care for children with additional needs although there are none present at the moment. Staff now each have a personal folder containing all relevant information about them. This enhances children's care by ensuring the suitability of staff.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was required to improve planning and increase the opportunities for all staff to contribute to it. It was also required to increase the opportunities for children to link sounds and letters and use their name and labels for a purpose. It was recommended that the opportunities for children to be freely creative with art and crafts materials be increased. Finally, the provider was required to develop information for parents to help them understand how they can further develop children's learning at home.

The provider now ensures that all staff have input to the planning of activities which enhances the variety of activities on offer. Children can regularly link sounds and letters but still have limited practical opportunities to recognise and use their name labels. This remains an issue. Opportunities for children to freely explore a wide range of art and craft materials also remain an issue. Parents are given information about what topics their children are doing at playschool and invited to contribute in some way. Staff will discuss how parents can extend their children's learning at home when they meet with them at the next open morning. This will enhance children's education.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 7: Health and National Standard 11: Behaviour. This involved allegations that staff: child ratios were not met, that wet children were not changed, that records of accidents were not signed by parents and that staff shouted at children. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to investigate these concerns. As a result of the visit two actions were set. These regarded parents signing the written records of medicines administered to children and the security of the premises. The provider completed these actions within 10 days. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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 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):

- ensure that the risk assessment of the premises is reviewed regularly
- ensure that all children are given more opportunities to develop independent skills and that activities are planned and organised to take account of the needs of younger children and the Birth to three matters framework.
- ensure that parents give written permission for staff to seek emergency medical advice/treatment for children and that all parents have access to written details of how to contact Ofsted

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):

- develop opportunities for parents to share what they know about what their children can already do when starting nursery education
- ensure children have more opportunities to freely experiment with arts and crafts materials and solve practical number problems
- develop planning to ensure that it identifies the next steps for individual children

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