

Mawnan Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	102923
Inspection date	19 October 2007
Inspector	Heather Tanswell
Setting Address	MCA Hall, Carwinian Road, Mawnan Smith, Falmouth, Cornwall, TR11 5JD
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Registered person	The Trustees of Mawnan 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?

Mawnan Playgroup is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and is a registered charity. It has been in operation for over 30 years and runs from a room in the village community hall. It is situated in the rural village of Mawnan Smith, near Falmouth, in Cornwall. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday, from 09:15 until 11:45 during term times only.

There are currently 20 children from two to four years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for nursery education.

The playgroup employs three staff. Two hold appropriate early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. One member of staff is currently attending additional training. The setting receives support from an advisory teacher from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted, because staff follow procedures and practices which meet their physical, nutritional, and individual health needs, for example, by having regard for any allergies such as a food intolerance. Children are mainly well protected from infection. They play in premises where staff hygienically clean surfaces before serving food. Children learn some good personal hygiene routines as they use individual paper towels to dry their hands. However, children share a bowl of water to wash their hands, which poses a risk of cross infection. Children receive suitable care, when they are unwell or injured, from staff who show concern for their well-being. Staff hold current first aid qualifications, and records of accidents and medication are complete.

Children benefit from eating healthy snacks. They have a choice of fresh fruit segments at snack-time, accompanied by a drink of milk or water. Children also learn how to prepare some simple healthy foods from fresh ingredients as part of planned activities, for example, by chopping up vegetables to make soup. They have constant access to fresh drinking water, to quench their thirst and maintain good fluid levels.

Children have regular opportunities to develop their strength and stamina out in the fresh air. Staff make particularly good use of the adjacent sports field where children can run about, climb farm gates, explore and test their agility. Children also push or ride wheeled toys, throw, catch and kick balls, climb, play parachute games and with hoops as part of planned activities organised to develop their physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play securely, safely and independently about the premises, because staff take great care to put into place and implement appropriate safety measures. Risk assessments, carefully implemented by staff before children arrive each day or when going on outings, identify and minimise potential hazards to children through accidental injury. Shut gates keep children safe within prescribed boundaries, which means children move about independently and safely.

Children handle a range of good quality equipment appropriate for their age and stage of development. Staff work hard each day to bring out and set up equipment to support a range of activities on a rota basis. Children learn to keep themselves safe as fire drills are practised routinely with regard for their patterns of attendance. Children also learn the best way to safely handle, and carry heavy boxes at tidy up time, is through teamwork.

Children are safeguarded from harm. Access to the premises is monitored carefully and end of day pick-ups managed to protect children. A comprehensive child protection policy and procedure backed up with important contact information ensures staff know exactly what to do if they have any concerns about the welfare of a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled at the group. They form firm friendships with other children and staff who spend their time interacting with the children. Staff use their sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn to plan a range of worthwhile experiences for children. Children enjoy plenty of free play, as well as structured adult led activities. Large group times are used well to inform and extend children's knowledge of the current topic. For example, by carefully examining and handling the autumnal collection of natural materials, children explore their differences, texture and colour. Children listen attentively and take part in stories by counting aloud and answering questions about animals characterised in pictures. Some activities, for example, the nail, shape and hammer boards, are not as well organised to suit the needs of younger or less able children.

Children move freely about the room, accessing a range of resources, such as role-play and small world equipment, adult led art and craft, a computer, tape machine with headphones, construction materials or sensory play with sand and dough. The lack of a sufficient number of mobile, low-level storage units means that children have little opportunity to make independent selections from tools and resources, other than those provided for them on a rota basis. Also, there are no real resources added to the role-play 'workshop' to extend learning, such as a tape measure, clipboard or spirit level to make good links with children's real life experiences and the activity more meaningful.

Children are confident and enthusiastic learners. Regular outings into the countryside and to local attractions, such as ferryboat trips and the zoo ensure children have a wide range of experiences in their community and the natural world. The setting's good connection with the local school ensures the transition between home and full-time education is positively managed to meet the needs of children.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make sound progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of the Foundation Stage and interact sensitively with the children to encourage their participation. Children are keen to learn and concentrate well, especially during adult led large group activities and self-chosen role-play. Children are sociable, team up and delight in role-play. They act out the roles of car mechanics and builders imaginatively. Children learn to understand emotions through stories and discussions about their feelings. As a result, they are keen to help, for example, by tidying away and assisting younger children to put on their boots before going outside to play. The special helper system used at registration and snack time helps children build their self-esteem and begin to understand how to meet the needs of others.

Children make marks and recognise their own name cards. However, they rarely link or form letters or numbers to their correct symbols as there is no number line or alphabet accessible for them to refer to. Children have few opportunities to sing, make music and be creative to support their learning overall, especially in literacy and language. Children learn about the seasons, weather and days of the week as they help complete the daily calendar. They use numbers to count aloud from one to 10. More able children's learning is not always extended as staff often step in too soon, answer their own questions and do not allow children sufficient time to reply or learn from their mistakes. Children build and construct models using geometric shapes and construction kits. For example, a recognisable go-cart is formed by using a hammer,

nails, and triangular, square, and circular, pieces of wood. Children are skilled at using the computer and know how to turn a tape recorder on and off. They develop their fine muscles effectively by manipulating pencils, glue sticks and scissors.

Plans clearly show the learning intentions of activities. Assessments records make good links between the stepping stones and children's achievements. Children's records are not evaluated sufficiently well to identify gaps in learning to use in liaison with parents to set targets for individual children's learning and to influence the planning of future activities. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and treat them with great care and concern. As a result, children develop positive attitudes to learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have opportunities to learn about themselves and their environment through planned activities that include outings on a local ferry to local places of interest, for example, beaches and woodland gardens open to the public. Visitors from within the local community help children learn more about the natural world and people with disabilities. Children handle a range of resources that show positive images of others and challenge stereotypical views, as part of their everyday play. However, insufficient thought is given by staff about how to plan activities to show positive images of other cultures and religions that build on children's understanding and appreciation of similarities and differences. Children behave well due to the warm and caring relationships they establish with staff whose company they enjoy. Staff support children in sharing, turn taking, being mannerly and tidying away through a sticker reward system. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive a welcome pack when they join the setting that gives them useful information about the management of the setting, its policies and procedures, rota duty expectations, and the curriculum. Regular newsletters make sure they know about recent and forthcoming events and topics. At the start of each week, parents can either join a short presentation or receive written information about the week's activities to ensure they play a continuing part in their child's education. Parents complete a simple form to ensure staff know what their children enjoy doing most at home, which helps staff begin to create a portfolio of evidence to celebrate what children can do. Each term parents receive feedback about their child's achievements and help set shared targets for their next steps in learning. Parent's views about the quality of the setting are sought through questionnaires, which are used to influence action plans for future improvement.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the care of a committed, well-established team of experienced staff who are employed by a committee consisting of parents of children attending the group. Staff work hard to make sure children get the most of the indoor and outdoor play areas and resources available to them. Although appraisals have been conducted and used to identify training needs, an action plan has not yet been implemented to make sure staff update their knowledge and reflect on their skills to improve practice. All the legally required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being, is in-place and is regularly reviewed. However, some records are not always kept on the premises, which means they are not readily

available for inspection by those that have a right to see them. The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff meet regularly to plan a variety of experiences across all six areas of learning using the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. The registered person has developed and begun to implement an action plan following the last inspection with ideas for improvement based on suggestions from local authority advisory workers. The great improvement made in partnership with parents and carers is a reflection of the hard work of all the parents and staff involved. The good ratio of adults to children and staff deployment contributes positively to children's enjoyment and sound progress overall.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the provider agreed to update their policies and procedures and improve the systems for vetting and appraising staff. The setting has evaluated all its policies and procedures making sure they are fully up to date and shared with parents and staff, which ensures children's welfare needs are met. An appraisal system has been developed and the first meeting has taken place to identify staff's strengths and future training needs. There have been no new staff employed at the setting since the last inspection, but the committee have now adopted a procedure to follow to make sure anyone who works with children is suitable.

At the last inspection, the quality of nursery education was judged as inadequate. The pre-school was asked to increase the levels of support and monitoring for staff in order to promote their professional development and develop methods in which to monitor and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of provision for nursery education. It was also asked to develop the partnerships with parents and carers in order that, they receive sufficient information regarding the nursery education curriculum, maintain their involvement with their children's learning by sharing information on what their child knows and can do before receiving nursery education and by being involved in setting individual progress targets.

The committee took action to improve the levels of support and monitoring of staff. They used ideas for improvements from local authority advisory workers to develop action plans. The written and informal information for parents and carers has improved greatly since the last inspection. Parents' views are now actively sought and used to influence positively the quality of the provision and outcomes for children.

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):

- make sure everyone washes their hands hygienically before eating
- make sure that all records are easily and promptly available for inspection by Ofsted and parents
- put in place and implement an action plan to show how the setting will ensure there is a deputy with the appropriate qualifications to take full charge in the absence of the person in charge.

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):

- provide children with more opportunity to extend their language and literacy skills and be creative by using and exploring their ideas through access to a range of tools, creative media, music and rhymes
- use the information gathered from parent/carers and key worker observations of learning to influence the setting of targets for future development and the planning of an appropriate curriculum, making sure activities are challenging and achievable for all
- plan activities and organise daily routines to support children's growing independence so that they can make choices, take initiatives and manage developmentally appropriate tasks for themselves.

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