

Gorsewood Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303476
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Inspector	Susan Patricia Birkenhead
Setting Address	Gorsewood CP School, Gorsewood Road, Murdishaw, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 6ES
Telephone number	01928 820 669
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Registered person	Gorswood Pre-School 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?

Gorsewood Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1978 and is managed by a committee of parents, whose children attend the setting. It operates from a designated room within Gorsewood Primary School, Gorsewood, Murdishaw, Runcorn. A maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. The playgroup is open Monday to Friday, during term time from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.40 to 15.10. Children have shared access to an enclosed outdoor play area within the school grounds.

There are currently 27 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these 27 children receive funding for early education. The playgroup serves children from the local community and supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs three members of staff. Of these three hold early years qualifications and one is working towards an additional qualification. The setting receives support from the local Qualified Teacher Support team (QTS) and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is positively promoted due to the suitable practices and procedures that staff follow. Children wash their hands at appropriate times and confidently explain, 'You get germs on your hands, which can make you sick'. Staff frequently use anti-bacterial sprays to keep surfaces clean. The informative sickness policy reflects the effective procedures followed and exclusion periods. Therefore, children are cared for within an environment that protects them from the risk of infection. Sufficient systems are in place for the recording of accidents and medication administered. However, confidentiality is not always respected when completing the accident record. First aid materials for treating minor injuries are readily available in the main room. All staff employed are qualified in first aid and have completed food hygiene training which further enhances their good health and well-being.

Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills, both indoors and outdoors, on a daily basis. Children develop their large skills as they climb, ride and balance using various resources. They negotiate space outdoors as they skilfully use the pedals or their feet to manoeuvre the wheeled toys backwards and forwards. They instigate outdoor games such as 'Ringa Ringa Roses' and take part in the 'parachute' game. Children who are due to go to school attend Physical Education (PE) sessions in the school hall once a week. They develop their fine, physical skills as they manipulate, roll and cut the play dough using a variety of tools. Therefore, children learn to develop good coordination and control of their bodies.

Children in the main enjoy a healthy and nutritional diet through the regular varied snacks they receive, which incorporate fruit, yoghurt, brown bread, as well as occasional children's favourites, such as 'hot dogs'. Children are provided with drinking water or milk during snack time and are seen accessing drinking water independently from the dispenser in the room at other times. Children assist in setting the table for snack and making their own sandwiches, which positively contribute to the development of their self-help skills and independence. Snack times provide a socially interactive time for all concerned, where children eat at their own pace in smaller groups around the tables, with staff on hand to offer support where necessary.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for within an environment that is secure and generally welcoming. The entrance to the school, playgroup and the outdoor play area are secure. Systems are in place to effectively monitor visitors to the setting and staff oversee the arrival and departure of the children and their parents. However, the display of children's art work is minimal within the room to further enhance the welcoming environment and create a sense of belonging for children. Appropriate use is made of the space available and children move freely around the varied activities and play materials on offer, to support the children's learning and play enabling them to play, relax and eat comfortably.

Children have access to a good range of resources and equipment to support, extend and challenge their learning. The low level storage systems around the room positively supports children in accessing alternative play materials of their choice. Play materials and equipment are checked for cleanliness, safety and damaged items are disposed of as necessary. Children are mainly cared for within a safe environment because the staff take sufficient steps to minimise

risks to the children. The risk assessments are reviewed regularly and the staff complete head counts when taking children outdoors to play and on return into the setting. However, attention is necessary to secure the doors of the sink unit in the room, which is the responsibility of the school maintenance, as this presents a hazard to staff and children. Children learn to keep themselves safe because the staff make them aware of unsafe practices and the consequences of their actions through discussion. They take part in fire evacuation drills regularly and the procedures followed are displayed.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded because the staff have a good understanding of indicators of abuse and are familiar with the procedures for reporting concerns. Reference materials are displayed in the room and the child protection policy, which is accessible to parents, makes staff aware of their responsibilities in protecting children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are greeted warmly by staff and the majority are confident and eager to leave their parents willingly shouting 'Goodbye mummy' as they leave the setting. Others are supported by staff who provide comfort when they are distressed and telephone the parents if they do not settle. Positive steps are taken to support children through the settling in period which include parents attending with them and a gradual separation programme being agreed. They sit together at circle time, where staff complete the register and discuss the items they bring from home. Children develop positive relationships with adults because of the key worker system developed and approach staff for help and support. This supports the individual needs of the children and contributes to their sense of security.

Children show interest in all they do and are confident to move between the play and activities available and select alternatives of their choice. Staff often change the play materials set out to further sustain children's interest during the session. The children regularly access the outdoor play area as part of the daily routine. The layout of the room provides different opportunities for children contributing to their care learning and play effectively. Staff are familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework because they have attended appropriate training, however, all children attending are currently over the age of three years.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. The manager and her staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, how children learn, and training relating to the Foundation Stage has been attended. The programme of activities is restricted to the short term planning and linked to themes followed, such as 'journeys'. In the main the activity planning is displayed on the notice board. However, the daily planning of activities is not always available or evaluated to plan for the next steps in children's learning. Staff are currently working with the new systems developed for the completion of observations during activities and the local authority 'Transition' document is used to assess children's developmental progress. However, entries to these records are not dated. Staff interact well with children and are developing their questioning skills appropriately to extend and challenge children's thinking and learning during play and activities.

Children are developing good relationships with one another and adults. They offer support to each other as they offer to help others put on their coats when going out to play. Children develop their self-help skills, which includes clearing their beakers and plates away after snack.

Most children are able to sit quietly when listening to stories or when others speak in the larger group and their good listening skills are recognised by staff verbally. They are becoming confident communicators as they take the lead in directing others in role play situations and discuss with staff events from home. They are beginning to give some meaning to the marks they make during activities. Some children are learning to write their names whilst others make marks to represent their name on the pictures they paint or draw. However, staff do not always maximise these opportunities as their name cards are not readily available for them to copy from. Opportunities allow children to freely access writing materials, however, due to the insufficient organisation of this area they show little interest in accessing the materials independently. Staff practise letters of the week with children to raise their awareness and they are encouraged to bring associated items from home for the interest table.

Children are developing a positive understanding of mathematics in everyday situations, for example, they count the number of beakers and plates they need for the number of children that sit at the table at snack time. They spontaneously count the items that the 'hungry caterpillar' eats at story time. Some children achieve this confidently whilst others are supported by staff. One child draws three lines to indicate how many boys live in her house whilst another points to the number three and says, 'That is my number because I am three'. Children learn to recognise and compare shapes to familiar objects. They talk about size as they refer to the objects being 'bigger' and 'smaller'.

Opportunities for children to explore and investigate are promoted positively. They explore what happens when different colours of paint are mixed and compare the results with others. The sand is accessible to children daily, they run their fingers through the sand and compare it to sugar. They fill and empty receptacles and ask for water to be added to the sand tray to make sand castles. Children discuss aspects of the natural world as they go on outings locally and collect different items from the wooded areas, such as conkers. They use their senses, such as touch to describe what the flour feels like when making play dough and identify differences when they cook the play dough. Children's learning of technology is in the main limited to the computers within the room and although other resources are available they are not readily available. Children skilfully manoeuvre the 'mouse' to access programmes of their choice independently and with support where necessary. Regular opportunities allow children to engage in creative activities. The painting easels are part of the continuous play provision and children can use a variety of materials for collage, to explore texture. Children talk about colour at regular intervals during the session and some recognise familiar colours correctly by name. Children have worthwhile opportunities to play imaginatively as part of the continuous provision. They care for the dolls and take them for walks around the room and invite others to take a trip to the park on the 'bus' which they create using the chairs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are included in the activities provided. Staff in the main develop knowledge of their individual needs and circumstances through information obtained from parents. However, there are inconsistencies in the information held on each child. For example, a small number of children's files do not contain the 'settling in' forms and some aspects of parental consent, which compromises the children's welfare. A sufficient range of play materials are available to represent positive images of diversity, such as dolls, books and play figures which assist in developing the children's understanding of the wider world. Staff broaden children's understanding by celebrating various cultural festivals during the year, such as Halloween and Chinese New Year through the creative activities and food tasting experiences. The policy in

place supports and welcomes children with learning difficulties or disabilities into the setting. If necessary, individual support is agreed with parental consent and support from outside agencies.

Children behave well and learn about appropriate behaviour through staff intervention. They receive regular and consistent praise and encouragement from the staff for their good behaviour and achievements. This has a positive impact on their self-confidence and self-esteem. Children learn to share, take turns and are learning to cooperate. They remind each other of the need to share play materials when sat at the activity tables and willingly agree to share the bicycles when asked during outdoor play. They respond well to staff requests for assistance in tidying away toys and setting the table for snack. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are happy with the care and education their children receive and find the staff approachable and welcoming. They receive good information about the setting, practices and procedures through the welcome brochure, which includes detailed reference to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Information is made available on the notice boards and newsletters keep them updated on the play group themes and letters of the week.

Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the running of the play group by joining the committee, fund raising events and attend the group as part of the parent rota. However, the playgroup experiences difficulties in recruiting parents for the committee. Information regarding the children's developmental progress is exchanged with parents in the main through informal discussions, planned parents' days and the transition documents completed by the child's key worker. However, information regarding the children's attainment on entry to the play group is not obtained, to further support this monitoring process.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The manager and staff team are aware of the individual roles they play and work well together to deliver a programme of activities to children. They operate a key worker system for the completion of developmental records and liaison with parents. However, staff appraisals are not yet carried out formally to identify training needs and monitor staff performance. Staff discuss aspects of the care and education provided informally over lunch time periods. Due to the difficulties in recruiting new committee members support is limited. The manager clearly recognises areas of development within the setting and is working with the Quality Teacher Support (QTS) to further develop some areas of their practice and organisation. The provision is monitored using the local authority self assessment document.

Established systems are in place for the recording of staff employed. These include details of the training they attended, qualifications, clearance and personal details. However, such systems are not in place for the clearance of the committee members who make up the registered provider. As a result, the necessary clearance through Ofsted has not been completed. This, therefore, constitutes a breach in regulation and as a result adversely affects the children's welfare.

The good staff to child ratio in place means that children have a positive level of support and attention during play and activities. There is a good level of qualified staff as they all hold early

year's qualifications and are committed to attending additional training to further extend their knowledge and understanding, to further benefit the children's learning. The regularly updated policies in the main provide detailed information to reflect the settings practices and procedures, with minimal attention necessary to the complaints policy and lost and uncollected child policy. All legally required documentation is in place. However, systems used for recording information, such as children and staff attendance lacks professionalism. The manager and staff are not always organised in the management of records, which means they are not easily located, not consistent and lack detail. This, therefore, has an adverse impact on some aspects of organisation in the setting.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

During the last care inspection the manager was asked to give attention to the content of the outings policy to ensure a safe adult to child ratio is maintained. Since the last inspection the policy has been reviewed and the manager clarified that a one to two adult ratio is deployed at all times during outings by recruiting parents to accompany their children. Therefore, ensuring children's safety at all times.

During the last Nursery Education inspection the manager was asked to develop the use of children's art work as a resource to enhance the environment and consolidate their learning. Since the last inspection children's art work has been displayed, however, due to the recent start of the new term the staff are currently replacing them. Therefore, minimal displays are in evidence and the recommendation is repeated.

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):

- make safe the cupboard doors of the sink unit in the main play room

- review the current arrangements for the storage and completion of information to ensure records can be easily located, respect confidentiality and provide consistent detail
- develop robust systems to provide details of all committee members who act as the registered person, ensure they complete the necessary clearance and consider introducing a formal system of staff appraisals.

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):

- review children's transition documents to ensure all entries are dated and obtain information from parents regarding the children's attainment on entry to the setting
- complete evaluations of activities, make daily activity planning accessible and use observations to inform future planning, taking into account the next steps in children's learning
- further extend opportunities for children to recognise their names and written words in a variety of situations and develop the use of children's work as a resource to enhance the environment, consolidate their learning and reinforce their self-esteem and self-image.

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