

Whalley Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	309525
Inspection date	03 October 2007
Inspector	Rachel Ayo
Setting Address	Whalley Adult Education Centre, Station Road, Whalley, Clitheroe, BB7 9RH
Telephone number	01254 822717
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Registered person	Whalley 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Whalley Pre-School Playgroup has been registered since 1993 and is run by a voluntary committee. The group operates from a hall within the Whalley Adult Education Centre on Station Road close to the town centre of Whalley, near Clitheroe in Lancashire. A maximum of 25 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. Sessions are offered term time only from 09.15 to 11.45, Monday to Friday, for children aged three and four years of age. Afternoon sessions are offered on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12.30 to 15.00 for children aged two to three years of age. There is no access to outdoor play, however, children are taken on regular outings in the local community.

There are currently 32 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and wider community. The setting supports a number of children who have a learning difficulty or disability.

There are 10 staff employed altogether, including the manager. Of these, seven staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Services.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Overall, children are well protected from infection because staff follow appropriate health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, they clean tables with an anti-bacterial solution before snack time and those responsible for the preparation of food are fully aware of effective practice, such as ensuring that their hands and fruit and vegetables are washed thoroughly. Good nappy changing procedures, along with the use of separate drying arrangements, effectively minimises cross infection.

A variety of posters help children learn about a healthy lifestyle, such as drinking lots of water, eating fruit and vegetables, washing hands and taking exercise. Staff plan a range of topics to help children learn about simple good health practices, such as dental hygiene. Children readily wash their hands before eating and clearly enjoy helping themselves to the liquid in the soap dispenser, after using the toilet.

Children are helped to be well nourished. The setting provides only healthy options for children including milk or water at snack time. Children's all round good health is additionally supported through ready access to a jug of water. Children clearly enjoy nibbling on fruit, cubes of cheese and breadsticks and learn about healthy eating through topics and discussion in the everyday routine. For example, staff talk to them about why sweets are not good for our teeth. The setting additionally takes part in the 'smile for life' accreditation scheme.

Although there is no outdoor area at the premises, staff set up a good range of apparatus and plan a wide range of interesting activities to ensure that children can take part in physical activity every day. For example, younger children ride around the hall on small wheeled toys and show excitement as they join in with action songs such as 'Five little speckled frogs'. Older children confidently use the climbing frame and clearly enjoy taking part in the obstacle course which entails going under hoops, balancing on blocks and throwing beanbags into different shaped holes. Children benefit from fresh air as they go on regular walks within the local community, for example, to look for mini-beasts, visit the library or collect autumn leaves for collages.

Children engage in a wide range of activities that require hand and eye coordination. For example, older children use tools and equipment competently as they manoeuvre the computer mouse, roll the dough flat to cut out shapes, such as a car and when drawing around shapes. Younger children confidently use spades to fill up buckets with sand and enthusiastically spread the glue onto paper as they make a collage.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming environment. A range of attractively displayed children's artwork, such as hand and feet prints, free paintings and posters adorn the walls, creating a stimulating visual impact. Space is used creatively and although staff have to set up the hall on a daily basis, they take pride in ensuring that resources and activities are set out in an inviting manner, which sustains children's interest as soon as they arrive. Children have individually labelled pegs, so that they know where to hang their coats, thus, helping them

develop a sense of belonging. Children use a good range of suitable and safe equipment that meets their individual needs and promotes their development.

Overall, children are cared for in a very safe and secure environment. Written risk assessments are regularly reviewed and possible risks are generally detailed well to ensure that hazards on the premises are minimised. A daily checklist is completed by staff to additionally support safety procedures. However, a full length mirror is present in the bathroom and staff are unable to confirm whether the glass is safe. Staff demonstrate good supervision levels, for example, when children are using the climbing frame and they ensure that soft mats are placed around this to minimise accidental injury.

Effective systems are in place to monitor access to the premises and ensure that children are unable to leave unsupervised. Fire safety is promoted well. For example, a detailed registration system is in place for staff and children and the emergency evacuation procedure is practised regularly, with each staff member having a specific role. Staff talk to even the youngest children about safe boundaries and older children learn to keep themselves safe, for example, as staff talk to them about stranger danger or safe practice when using the climbing frame. Visitors, such as a Police Community Support Officer, also help children learn about safety. Staff encourage older children to move the train track away from the coat pegs, explaining that they are going to bump themselves.

Children are safeguarded because staff in the playgroup understand their role in child protection. Along with the designated person, they have all attended up to date training and are very aware of possible signs of abuse or neglect and of the procedure to follow. Following training, regular meetings keep staff up-to-date and help them consolidate their learning. An up-to-date policy means that concerns of a child protection nature are passed on in a prompt and efficient manner to ensure children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children eagerly enter the setting. They are extremely well settled and confident, presenting as happy, for example, as they readily say goodbye to their parents and immediately start playing with their preferred activity. Staff have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the needs of children under three years and are clearly familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This means that children are involved in a good range of well planned activities, which support their development and learning. For example, they develop good imagination as they play with the tea set or as they listen to the doll's heartbeat with a plastic stethoscope, after being shown by a staff member.

Even the youngest children make decisions, for example, as they choose to explore the paint using their fingers and tools or investigate the collage materials or glue stuck to their fingers. They acquire new skills and are extremely interested in trying out unfamiliar resources. For example, children approach the computer and start experimenting with the mouse; staff intervene to offer support by showing them how this works.

Children respond well to staff who demonstrate a warm and caring manner. They help young children to feel a sense of self-assurance through positive relationships. Staff show an interest in what children say and do and readily join in their play, for example, as they hold out their arms to be bandaged, accept a pretend cup of tea or sit and build with construction toys.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are clearly familiar with the Foundation Stage, which results in them planning a broad and balanced curriculum. Plans are detailed and include differentiation to show how the individual needs of children who learn at different paces are well catered for. Effective use is made of time and resources to ensure that children are engaged in a varied and interesting range of experiences and able to make choices about their play and learning. Staff spend a good amount of their time sitting directly with children to ask them questions and extend their learning. Although staff maintain records of children's achievements, illustrated with photographs, children's starting points are not thoroughly identified. Consequently, this means records are not fully effective in helping staff to track children's progress to fully plan their next steps for learning.

Children clearly enjoy the playgroup and display high levels of interest and motivation as they sit and persist for lengthy periods of time at an activity of their choosing, for example, the construction table, computer or with the train track. Children confidently initiate interactions with others, for example, when they talk to the inspector about family members, such as a sister. They form good relationships as they seek out their peers to share experiences. For example, excellent cooperation is observed as small groups of children link up; they negotiate and take turns to find a piece of wooden track to build a long, complex train track. Although children are developing some health and bodily awareness, for example, healthy eating, they show a limited awareness of some aspects of hygiene within the daily routine, such as nose blowing.

Children use language very well in a range of situations. They talk activities through, reflecting on what they are doing. For example, they tell the inspector that they went on a walk and collected leaves for the leaf printing activity that they are engaging in. Children clearly enjoy listening to stories as they cosily sit in the reading area with staff. Children are beginning to recognise some familiar words as they correctly select their name to self-register on arrival. Children ascribe meaning to marks, for example, as they paint a picture of 'mummy', 'daddy' and a 'puddle'. They explain that it is raining in their picture. Children are encouraged to label their own creations, such as a painting or computer certificate; some children are able to write their names whilst others write individual letters or make their own marks.

Children show an interest in numbers and counting. They readily join in with the 'Seven days in a week' song and some children count beyond eight objects as they say one number name for each item. Children engage in simple calculation as they count how many plates are needed at snack time or identify how many dough balls are left when one is taken away. They show an interest in shape, space and measure and use size language well as they talk about the big tower that they have made; recognising that it is taller than them. Children use shapes appropriately for tasks and choose suitable components to make a particular model, for example, the complex 'curly' train track.

Children make complex models, such as a boat or jail as they join and build with construction materials. They show excellent use of technology as they operate simple computer programmes, with only limited adult support required. Children comment on and notice particular features of the weather as they talk about autumn, clouds and the wind. Children respond, express and communicate their ideas using a range of senses. For example, they talk about the rustling leaves and feel the texture and look at patterns as they engage in leaf printing. They show delight as they observe what happens when different colours are combined. Children clearly

enjoy listening to music and create movement as they enthusiastically sing along to the 'Yellow school bus' song.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children and families are welcomed positively into the setting. Staff work in close partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure that all children are valued and included fully into the life of the setting and have their individual needs met, including children with a learning difficulty or disability. An effective settling-in procedure, including the key worker system, means that positive relationships are established before placement to help children feel secure and to ensure that parents are confident and happy to leave their children.

Pre-placement communication both written and verbal is generally very good and includes detailed registration forms, verbal discussion and the provision of an information booklet. Parents are asked to complete an 'All about me' booklet that provides staff with additional information, enabling them to offer appropriate care and get to know each child. This includes gathering information about family members, favourite toys or stories and what children like to do. Parents are also invited to provide regular information about their child's activities and experiences at home. However, the current arrangements for sharing the setting's policies and procedures before children are admitted to the setting is not effective. Regular parent and committee meetings, the annual general meeting, newsletters and open days, keep parents effectively informed on an on-going basis. Feedback from parents is extremely positive with regards to staff and the care given to their children.

Children are extremely well behaved in the setting and have a good awareness of the boundaries set. Even those new to the setting learn to respond to appropriate expectations for their behaviour because staff act as good role models and use effective strategies. For example, each time staff need children to stop and listen, such as when it is time sit down for registration or tidy up for snack, they ring a bell. Children's achievements and positive behaviour are highly valued and acknowledged through praise and encouragement, reward certificates and stickers, which children proudly show off. Children relate well to others and benefit from a good range of resources that help them to gain an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others and value diversity. This includes dolls, posters, books and small world people. Additional activities include food tasting from around the world and celebrating festivals.

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

Partnership with parents and carers in relation to the nursery education is good. They receive detailed information about the Foundation Stage and planning is displayed to highlight what children are doing. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's progress on a regular basis and they are encouraged to share what they know. Parents are actively involved in their child's learning. For example, regular newsletters inform them about current themes and they are provided with information showing how they can extend their child's learning at home. They are encouraged to bring things into the setting, or dress their child in a particular colour as part of a topic. Parents are also invited into the setting, for example, to talk about their job, as part of the planned curriculum.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Records demonstrate that staff who work directly with children are subject to vetting, which means that children are protected. Although appropriate forms have been submitted to inform Ofsted of changes to the committee, the suitability process has not been fully followed. This is as a result of some disclosure forms, required for appropriate checks to be carried out on individuals to determine their suitability, not being completed and forwarded to Ofsted. Although this is a breach in requirements by the registered provider, those individuals concerned do not have direct contact with children.

A high level of staff hold an early years qualification, which means that children are well cared for by adults who have a good knowledge and understanding of child development. An effective appraisal system means that staff continue to develop their knowledge and skills, which enhances outcomes for children. For example, all staff update their first aid training certificate as required. Staff have clear roles within the setting and are deployed effectively, which means that children are well supported. Good routines ensure that children spend their time purposefully and feel secure and children are clearly familiar with what happens next as they explain to the inspector that they have tidied up because it is sticker time.

Policies and procedures are generally detailed, although there is no clear recruitment policy, showing procedures including how the suitability of staff is determined. Most policies and procedures work well in practice to promote positive outcomes for children. Record keeping systems are used suitably overall to promote the efficient and safe management of the setting, meet children's individual needs and promote their well-being.

Leadership and management with regards to the nursery education is good. The manager leads the provision for nursery education and although she takes the lead in planning, all staff are involved in sharing their ideas, which demonstrates to them that their contributions are valued. The manager acts as an excellent role model as she spends time working directly with staff and children. Effective staffing procedures ensure that they are generally very clear about their role in teaching and learning. The provision is evaluated as a whole regularly and activities are evaluated to assess their effectiveness on children's progress. Close links are maintained with the early years teacher team and the manager is very proactive in implementing new initiatives to enhance and further improve the quality of nursery education and care offered. The present system for monitoring children's progress is sufficient. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transition for children from the setting to school, which promotes their confidence and helps them feel secure.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection a recommendation was raised with regards to keeping records for younger children and sharing these with parents. Partnership with parents and information sharing is enhanced because staff have developed suitable files based around the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

At the last nursery education inspection a point of consideration was raised with regards to children's physical development. Children's opportunities to develop skills in balancing and climbing are enhanced because of the provision of a good range of equipment.

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 all 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 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):

- confirm whether or not the mirror in the bathroom poses a risk to children, and if so, ensure that it is made safe or inaccessible
- further improve the arrangements in place for sharing the setting's policies and procedures with parents
- develop a clear recruitment policy that includes vetting procedures and ensure that the procedure for ensuring the suitability of committee members is fully followed.

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):

- further develop children's health and bodily awareness with regards to hygiene
- enhance children's assessment records to show a clearer picture of progress.

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