

Slaithwaite Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Jill Lee

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Registered person Slaithwaite 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 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?

Slaithwaite Pre-school Playgroup was registered in 1993. It operates in the community centre in Slaithwaite, near Huddersfield. It is managed by a voluntary management committee, mainly comprising parents. The playgroup serves the local area.

Children are cared for in one main play room. They have access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45 and from 12.30 to 15.00 during term time only.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. They are currently caring for 75 children aged two to five years, of whom 41 children receive funding for early education. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

There are five staff employed to care directly for children, three of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. The playgroup is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) and receives support from the local authority. They have recently commenced the PLA Quality Assurance Scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy outdoor activity as a planned part of each session. They love playing in the fresh air, pedalling the cars and scooting along fast. They practise balancing skills and learn to throw and catch balls. They climb confidently on the large metal gate, developing coordination. Children play hopscotch and make dens out of large boxes. They march and dance to different kinds of music, singing their marching song as they go back indoors up the slope. They dance with ribbons and enjoy weaving them around the railings. Children use a wide range of equipment to extend their skills and physical play is well planned to help children use their bodies in a variety of ways.

Staff implement clear health and hygiene guidelines, so that children are protected from infection. Individual health care plans help staff to be fully aware of children's needs. Arrangements for first aid and administering medication effectively protect children. Staff use daily routines well to help children learn how to keep themselves healthy. For example, they know why they must wash their hands when they help to prepare the fruit for snack. They become increasingly independent in attending to their own personal care.

Staff have clear information about children's health and dietary needs. Children are introduced to different foods at snack time, encouraging them to try new tastes and textures. They often help to prepare their own snacks; for example, they make fruit smoothies and dips to eat with bread. They enjoy baking and use cookery books to find recipes to meet different dietary needs, like a vegan diet. Staff talk about the importance of healthy eating with children and help them to think about ways to keep their body healthy, although this is not enhanced by accessible books and posters. Children choose when they want to have their snack and are able to access drinks independently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff consistently reinforce rules and boundaries within everyday activities, so that children's understanding of safety is strongly promoted. Children are cared for by staff who confidently provide opportunities for free exploration within safe limits. They routinely remind children about safe practice, for example, when using the large play equipment. Children know they must hold hands and walk in pairs to go outside. When on the steps they know they must 'walk sensibly and don't run'. Children remember that they are not allowed to climb on the railings unless the safety mat is out. They are well supervised and encouraged to behave in responsible ways. Children learn to use the well planned space purposefully, accessing all areas of the environment with safety.

A well considered range of resources is stored at child height, so that children can select them freely. Appropriate risk assessments are conducted to ensure children's safety in the shared building. Children are always supervised to the toilet and there is coded access to the playroom. Staff carefully monitor collection times. Registers are kept correctly, evacuation procedures are practised routinely and details of visitors are recorded.

Children are cared for by staff who encourage them to share their feelings and make their needs known. All the staff have recently updated their knowledge of child protection issues and

procedures, so that they are fully informed about their responsibilities within the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The child protection policy has been reviewed to reflect recent requirements. There are clear systems in place to record any concerns but sufficient detail is not recorded in existing injury records and children's full names are not consistently recorded on accident records.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at playgroup. They are settled and secure, as staff show interest in everything they do and help them feel at ease. They listen closely to them and encourage them to share news from home. The environment is child friendly and welcoming and resources are set out attractively to encourage children's active participation and free exploration. Staff are confident to allow children to explore independently for long periods without interruption. This helps children to concentrate well and develop their own ideas, so that they become motivated and enthusiastic learners.

Children explore lots of different media like sand, water, paint and dough. They fill and empty containers, roll and shape the play dough and paint delightful, brightly coloured pictures. Their imaginary play is well developed. They dress up, care for the dolls and put the shopping away. They make up their own stories, using the small world people. They coat the large beads in paint and roll them enthusiastically in the big tin to make coloured tracks.

Children under three years settle very well and play contentedly alongside the older children. The planned environment and relaxed routines enable them to play and develop at their own pace, becoming fully engrossed in the activities which absorb them most. Staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use it actively to inform their planning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Well considered planning of the daily environment ensures that children enjoy a broad range of appropriate experiences in all areas of learning. Children are interested; they learn to concentrate and persevere very well with activities they enjoy.

Children communicate confidently, using language well to share their own ideas. They love stories and often sit quietly reading to themselves or to each other. They use the photograph books to recall activities and talk about what they like doing. They learn to listen attentively. Children enjoy a range of factual books, which promote their awareness of the world around them. They have opportunities to write for real purposes in their role play. They learn to recognise and write their name and staff promote their interest in letter sounds in everyday conversations and using alphabet jigsaws.

Children become familiar with number concepts and shapes in their everyday activities. They know only four children are allowed at the snack and play dough tables. They play games and count the spots on the dice, working out how many spaces they can move. At group time, they act out number rhymes. They investigate mathematical concepts, as they pour and scoop, filling and emptying containers in the sand and water. They routinely enjoy baking activities. Children learn about the natural and wider world, as they observe 'mini-beasts', grow sunflowers and find out about different forms of transport. They access the creative workshop freely to explore

their own creative ideas, making glittery collage pictures and 'junk' models. They make up their own songs for the fund raising concert.

Staff continually monitor and evaluate children's interests and their access to resources in the continuous provision, to help plan enhancements to their independent play choices. However, detail in planning does not clearly outline the adult role and what children are intended to learn, so that the focus of teaching is not always sufficiently defined. This means staff do not consistently maximise some learning opportunities, for example, by using snack time or construction activity to promote practical problem solving.

Staff interact well with children to help consolidate their learning. They model skills and reinforce expected behaviour, so that children work cooperatively and use activity areas productively. Staff have developed clear systems to observe children's interests and monitor their individual progress. Assessments of progress are clearly linked to the stepping stones. However, staff do not consistently use their spontaneous observations of children's play and interests immediately to inform planning for next steps in their learning, so that they do not always fully challenge children within the everyday environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children arrive eagerly at playgroup and settle happily at their chosen activity. They show a strong sense of belonging. They are very familiar with daily routines and form warm and affectionate relationships with the staff, promoting their confidence and self-esteem. Staff enable children to play together in a caring, inclusive environment, so that they learn to be kind and sensitive to each other's feelings. The older children are very supportive of the younger ones. Good behaviour is sensitively encouraged, warmly praised and rewarded. Children know what is expected of them, as they sweep up spilt sand and help to keep the play environment tidy, share toys and wait to have their turn in the number game. Staff clearly explain why certain behaviour is unacceptable, so that children feel supported and know that staff will always help them to resolve any difficulties. This helps them to play together harmoniously.

Children use books and resources which show positive images of other cultures and abilities. They enjoy activities, like role play and dressing up, which raise their awareness of their local community and the wider world. They take part in fund raising activities, like the summer concert, helping them to be more aware of the needs of others. Parents write signs in their home language, so children see different scripts. Children listen to music from around the world and enjoy 'sing and sign' sessions, learning about different ways people communicate. Staff create an environment in which children talk freely about their lives and learn about the lives of others. They participate actively and make choices about their play. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Parents' relationships with the staff are relaxed and comfortable. Staff welcome parents' active involvement in playgroup, for example, helping on rota. Parents receive an informative welcome booklet and policies and procedures are displayed, along with the Ofsted poster for parents. They are confident to raise any concerns. The complaints procedure clearly reflects current requirements, although the address of the regulator is out of date. There is a system in place to keep a record if a complaint is received.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. They receive information about both the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff communicate informally

about progress on a daily basis. Photographs are used well in displays and development records to share children's experiences. Termly summary reports help to ensure parents are familiar with planning for next steps in their child's learning. Parents are able to access their child's development record at any time and to contribute to it. Staff encourage parents' active involvement in their child's learning, for example, by producing a 'Do at home' sheet to support each half-termly theme.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective planning and organisation within the playgroup helps staff to promote children's welfare and safety. Relaxed daily routines help to support children's varying needs and interests. Staff are deployed well to ensure appropriate levels of care and supervision.

The leadership and management of children's care and education is good. Planned use of space and resources effectively promotes children's independent participation. Staff work together well as a cohesive team. They meet together regularly to monitor and review their practice. They work closely with the advisory teacher and are becoming more skilled at using self-evaluation to inform their action planning. Observations of children help staff to monitor progress and there are systems in place to monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on children's learning. Children's experiences are enhanced, as staff access appropriate training and development opportunities.

Required policies and procedures are in place and mostly implemented effectively, so that children's welfare is safeguarded. Recruitment systems are robust, ensuring that staff are suitably skilled and experienced to work with children. Documentation is accessible and stored confidentially. Appropriate induction procedures and systematic appraisal of staff development needs help to ensure staff are able to meet children's individual needs. Required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and procedures for their regular review and updating are clearly established. Parents' wishes regarding their child's care clearly influence day-to-day practice and clear written agreements are recorded.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the playgroup was asked to organise the registration system to include times staff are on the premises, to review the independent accessibility of resources and to enhance systems for sharing children's records of achievement with parents. With regard to nursery education, they were asked to use the early learning goals to plan for the next steps in individual children's learning. This included the need to increase children's awareness of the different purposes of writing, to improve the use of resources to promote children's understanding of number, increase opportunities for children to design and build and making greater use of the outdoors to promote understanding of the natural world and the local environment. They were also asked to develop staff appraisal and systems to monitor and evaluate the provision.

The playgroup has worked extremely hard to address these issues effectively and has made very good progress. Registers now clearly reflect when staff are present, so that staff:child ratios are clearly monitored. The daily environment is now organised to encourage independent selection of resources to support all areas of learning. A range of measures have been introduced

to improve sharing of information about children's activities and their progress with parents. This is enabling them to become more involved in their child's learning.

Staff have developed a clear and simple planning system, which ensures that children have experiences in all areas of learning each day. Staff are reviewing the ways in which children's progress is observed and monitored, so that planning for next steps in their learning more clearly reflects their interests and learning style. Improved planning of the environment and access to resources is enhancing children's learning opportunities. They have free access to mark making and mathematical resources and opportunities for construction and design. Planning now routinely incorporates activities that raise children's awareness of the natural world and their local community. This enhances the challenge in children's play and promotes more opportunity for independent exploration.

There is now a well-planned system in place for appraisal of staff, which is used well to identify their training and development needs. Systems are established to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and children's learning.

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 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 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 sufficient detail is recorded in existing injury records and that accident records clearly show the child's full name.

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):

- clarify further, within the planning process, the adult role, the focus of teaching and what children are intended to learn in all area of the continuous provision
- use spontaneous observations of children's play and interests more immediately to inform planning for next steps in their learning.

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