

Central Methodist Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311383
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Inspector	Angela Margaret Ellis
Setting Address	Mortimer Street, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire, BD19 5AR
Telephone number	01274 87312
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Registered person	Central Methodist 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?

Central Methodist Playgroup is a committee run playgroup which has been established for over 25 years. The group operates from within the church hall in the Central Methodist Church building in Cleckheaton and serves families within the local residential area.

There are currently 20 children on roll. This includes three funded three-year-olds. There are no funded four-year-olds attending. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is currently supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are systems in place to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens three mornings a week during term time. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00.

There are five staff employed, of which four work with the children, covering the sessions between them as required. Procedures are in place for emergency and relief cover. All staff are working towards a recognised Early Years qualification. The setting receive advisory teaching support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay reasonably healthy because staff generally follow appropriate health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. Children are reminded to use soap and paper towels after using the toilet. However, children are learning insufficiently about the importance of personal hygiene through daily routines. For example, staff do not remind children to wash their hands before and after eating. This means that the risk of cross infection is not effectively being minimised and poses a risk to children's health.

Children learn about healthy eating as they have discussions with staff about the food they eat. A good variety of healthy snacks are offered to the children, which they clearly enjoy. Children choose from different fruits and vegetables and express preferences for either tomato, banana or carrot. Children confidently choose what they would like to drink when they are thirsty from a choice of milk or water. Staff are well-informed about children's individual dietary needs and take these into account to ensure they remain healthy.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their physical development. Daily physical activity both indoors and outdoors effectively forms part of the continuous provision to enable children to develop their gross and fine motor skills. For example, they climb and jump, develop their co-ordination by enthusiastically riding wheeled toys and play ball games. However, the outdoor area is not included within the planning of activities and therefore, the children who enjoy being outdoors a great deal are missing out on resources that extend children's learning indoors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have free access to a wide range of toys and equipment; these are appropriately organised to ensure children can safely and independently select from the low-level storage. Children are cared for in a suitably safe environment, where many policies and procedures are in place to protect children.

Children are learning how to keep themselves safe, for example, by being asked to walk and not run indoors. Increased adult to child ratios on outings keep children safe. Children learn the procedures for emergency evacuation, because once all of the new children and staff are settled in, procedures are practised the with them.

Children are appropriately protected because sufficient staff hold a first aid qualification. Staff have a suitable understanding of child protection issues and local procedures to protect children. However, the child protection policy has not been updated in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Management has a clear understanding of vetting procedures and employs staff who have relevant experience, knowledge and skills in caring for children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the playgroup because they are cared for by friendly staff who are interested in them, give praise, support and encouragement. Staff are sensitive to the

transitional needs of those who are new to the playgroup and understand well that children require time to settle in according to their individual needs. Home visits that staff undertake prior to the children starting are a strong element of the settling in procedure. This helps to ease the children into the setting as the children have a familiar face to relate to.

Children's independence is promoted as they move around the environment freely and make choices from the wide range of activities and resources available. The routine of the playgroup provides a balance of spontaneous play and focused activities, such as baking, and children enthusiastically join in with circle time, play musical instruments and join in action songs or rhymes. Children clearly enjoy playing instruments, marching and singing to the 'Grand Old Duke of York'.

Outcomes for children under three-years-old is satisfactory. Staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and have the pack. However, systems are not in place to use the framework effectively to plan and record children's individual progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. A very small number of children aged three-years-old are in receipt of funded nursery education. Staff have a suitable knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use a reasonable range of teaching methods. However, as more than half of the staff are new and settling in themselves, systems are not yet in place to monitor how effectively they are implementing the Foundation Stage. A suitable understanding of how individual children learn at their own pace is demonstrated by staff. Children eagerly join in a varied range of purposeful first-hand experiences, developmentally appropriate activities. They are confident and independent within their own self-care and take initiative in their play.

Children follow their own personal interests and one child was very eager to show how clever they are at writing the letters of their name. However, there are less resources within other areas of play to enable children to practise writing for a purpose, both indoors and outdoors, to further develop their communication, language and literacy skills. Children are naturally interested in counting and a child confidently counted six dots while playing with a dice outdoors, however, there are few resources for children to recognise numerals whilst playing outdoors.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed because practitioners offer a range of resources and activities that enable children to explore and investigate. They have outings where they look for small creatures which they bring back to look at more closely, learning to care for and respect other living things.

Children express themselves creatively in a variety of ways, using their imagination through painting, drawing, imaginative role play, exploring musical instruments and singing action songs and rhymes. Children use their imagination to good effect to recreate real and act out pretend experiences. For example, a child sitting in a coupe car outdoors, explained, that she was going to the supermarket to buy some bananas.

Children have access to a wide range of large and small equipment that enables them to develop their physical skills both indoor and outdoors. A bike with stabilisers provides a good challenge for those children confident enough to have a go and children clearly enjoy playing ball games such as, throwing and catching with practitioners. Children enjoy handling a range of small objects such as, the heart shaped cutters for the biscuits they were making.

The planning of activities and experiences provided satisfactorily cover the six areas of learning. There are basic systems in place for assessing children's learning. However, they do not clearly identify how individual children are progressing through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, in order to inform staff to plan effectively for their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn to develop positive attitudes towards others and an understanding of diversity through a varied range of activities. These include resources which show positive images of ethnicity, culture, disability and gender. Practitioners have a good understanding of children's individual needs and they ensure all children have fair and equal opportunities to join in with all the activities. There is appropriate support in place for children who have learning difficulties and disabilities and there is close liaison with parents at all times to ensure individual objectives are met.

Children behave appropriately because practitioners have realistic expectations based upon the children's level of understanding. Positive interaction with plenty of meaningful praise and encouragement is used consistently with all the children. Good manners are reinforced at snack time and children learn to respect each other and other living things through routines and activities. They are learning to take turns and share toys through sensitive explanations and good role modelling from staff. Children are encouraged to appreciate other people's feelings and they are developing a sense of fairness. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. A well presented notice board keeps parents suitably informed about the curriculum and events. Children's own routines from home are closely adhered to help them feel settled and secure. Information is exchanged daily with parents which means that children are cared for according to each child's needs. Parents are welcomed and included in all aspects of the provision and they give their support to special events, such as parties, outings and fund raising events.

Parents of children who receive nursery education funding are kept appropriately informed about what their children are learning; they can access their children's progress record at any time and practitioners are approachable so any issues can be easily discussed. Systems are in place for parents and carers to provide compliments and complaints about the service provided. However, the procedure for reporting a complaint requires updating in line with the requirements.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from dedicated staff who are committed to attend training to ensure that the setting meets the required qualifications. At present qualifications for staff do not meet the requirements and this is a breach in the regulations. Many staff are new and are developing their roles and responsibilities. They are effectively deployed both indoors and outdoors and adult to child ratios are appropriately met.

Children benefit from established routines that ensure they can access a varied range of experiences. This includes a balance of structured as well as spontaneous activities. Creative

use of space and presentation of the activities and resources enable children to initiate their own play and learning sufficiently well.

The required policies and procedures to protect children, promote their well-being and support them to develop their potential are in place and most have been updated in line with regulations. All the required records are available, however, the staff register of attendance is not complete at present. The nursery meets the minimum ratio of staff to children which enables staff to interact with the children giving appropriate support and encouragement. This helps children to feel secure and confident in their environment.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Some staff have received more training to deliver the Foundation Stage Curriculum than others and this is demonstrated in their reasonable knowledge, understanding and delivery of it. As it is the beginning of a new term, many of the children and staff are new and the focus is on settling in and building up relationships. Children make satisfactory progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Progress has been made since the last inspection. The provider agreed to make improvements to the risk assessments, develop the operational plan and make available a complaints procedure for parents.

Risk assessments have been improved and implemented, resulting in the safety precautions within the setting being more effective and enabling the provider to act in the best interest of the children. The operational plan has been developed and a complaints procedure is displayed on the parents notice board which fosters a positive partnership with parents.

Progress has been made for three-year-old children in receipt of nursery education funding. The provider was asked to improve their knowledge and understanding of the areas of learning within the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' and implement a suitable staff appraisal system to identify individual training needs for staff. The current manager has an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plans a broad range of topics which ensure that children cover all of the areas of learning appropriately. A comprehensive training plan is in place to ensure that all staff will be supported to be competent and confident in implementing the Foundation Stage in order to maximise learning opportunities 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):

- provide an updated action plan detailing how staff will achieve their appropriate qualifications; including details of time scales for completion
- ensure that there is a system for registering staff attendance, showing arrival and departure times
- ensure that the complaints procedure is updated in line with the regulations
- ensure that the child protection policy is updated in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.
- ensure that hygiene routines regularly reinforce hand washing routines to minimise the risk of cross infection
- incorporate the 'Birth to three matters' framework within the planning and assessments to effectively meet the outcomes for those children under three-years-old.

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):

- clearly detail in the record of achievements, how children are progressing through the areas of learning and use these assessments to plan for the child's next step of learning
- extend the resources within other areas of play both indoors and outdoors to enable children to recognise print, practise writing for a purpose and recognise numbers
- improve the planning of activities to incorporate the outdoor play area and enhance the provision to mirror as much as possible the learning experiences provided indoors
- monitor how effectively staff are implementing the Foundation Stage.

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