

Stockton Lane Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	321590
Inspection date	12 September 2007
Inspector	Linda Cook
Setting Address	Stockton Lane, York, North Yorkshire, YO31 1JG
Telephone number	07746 806426
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Registered person	Stockton Lane 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?

Stockton Lane Playgroup opened in 1964. It operates from the premises of the Christchurch Centre in Stockton Lane, Heworth on the outskirts of York and is managed by a committee of parents. The main hall and two small rooms are used at various times depending on the activities being undertaken.

There are currently 63 children on the roll. This includes 49 children who receive funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children who have learning difficulties attend, and children who speak English as an additional language are made welcome. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00 Monday to Friday and on Wednesday afternoons 12.30 to 15.30. An additional session is also provided on a Thursday afternoon when there is sufficient demand.

Four part-time staff work with the children, at least three are present each session with parent helper support. Three staff have appropriate early years qualifications and all have appropriate experience. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and is a member of the local partnerships of

school, day nurseries and childminders. Teacher input is received from the local schools children will attend. The group is currently in the process of undertaking 'Steps for Quality' and has achieved step one.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children begin to develop a good understanding about the importance of healthy practices through the daily routines. They are encouraged to wash their hands after messy play, toileting and before snacks. This helps them effectively understand the need to practise regular routines of personal hygiene. Children are kept very safe from the spread of infection as staff clean tables before and after use, and implement an appropriate sick child policy. Staff follow effective procedures regarding accidents and the administration of medicines and have attended first aid training.

Children enjoy physical play and the daily routine ensures the children play outdoors most days. They move around the setting confidently and with control. They demonstrate a good awareness of space as they avoid collisions when they manoeuvre wheeled toys and find a space to sit at circle time. They competently use a wide range of equipment, for example, climbing frame, play tunnels and wheeled toys to develop their physical skills, they also enjoy dancing and moving to music.

Children are provided with snacks and regular drinks. However, while they can choose from milk or water they do not have a choice of snacks, and the biscuits which are often provided do not fully support children's good health. Activities and tasting sessions are planned and promote discussion and contribute to the children's understanding of healthy eating. Specific dietary requirements and food allergies are recorded on the children's record forms and any specific needs are catered for.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, welcoming environment, which is light and well maintained. There is a wide range of resources available which are safe and well maintained and cover all areas of learning. Children are kept safe as there are effective safety measures in place. These include fire prevention equipment, a fully secure outdoor play area and the outside door is kept locked while the session is in progress. Risk assessments are completed covering all areas of the provision, including indoors, outdoors and outings. These are regularly reviewed and regular safety checks completed. Children build a good awareness of safety through practising emergency evacuations regularly. The children's safety is further safeguarded by vigilant staff who give children's safety high priority.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. Staff are aware of the types of abuse and the signs to look for and relevant information is kept on file. Staff members have attended training on child protection and they have a clear procedure to follow if they have concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The environment is child centred and staff give excellent attention to children's needs, feelings and ideas, allowing them to initiate their own play and providing skilled support to extend their learning. Children eagerly enter the provision and greet staff and friends. Children who are new to the setting are confident in their surroundings and soon engage in their chosen activity. This is due to an effective settling-in policy and caring staff who are sensitive to the children's needs.

Children initiate conversation with staff telling them about significant events in their life. They are eager to demonstrate what they know at circle time, joining in conversations about the days of the week and the weather. Activities are well planned and meet the needs of the children who attend and these are supported by a very good range of toys and resources. During the day the children have the opportunity to engage in planned activities and free play to bring a good balance between free and structured play. During the day all children enjoy the regular opportunities for outdoor play. The group activities are effectively organised to meet the varying needs of the different ages of children who attend. The staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this is incorporated into the planning of activities especially for the younger children who attend.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff work well as a team they are clear in their roles and provide consistent levels of support and interaction with the children. They are very attentive to children's ideas and skilfully adapt the intended learning to follow through on the children's interests and contributions. Children make good progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff are secure in their understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and this is demonstrated in the detailed planning linked to the areas of learning. Regular observations of the children contribute to the assessment process; these are recorded in the children's individual assessment files. There are clear links between the planning and assessment process to ensure the children's individual next steps in learning are provided for. The available space is organised well, this enables the children to successfully initiate their own play and make choices. Staff show particular skills at extending children's learning through sensitive questioning, encouraging children to extend their thinking and predict what might happen next. For example, when the children relate a story they are asked, 'and what happened then?'

Children are developing very good communication skills, they are confident in speaking to others and eager to share their experiences with the staff. They demonstrate emergent writing skills, with the more able children writing their name on their work and others forming recognisable letters. They begin to recognise their name in print as they identify their own name badges and coat pegs. Children have good access to a wide range of books, they handle them well turning pages appropriately and following print from left to right. They listen attentively to stories in small and larger groups.

Children are developing good understanding of number, they count confidently to 10 and beyond and are beginning to recognise corresponding numerals. They learn to recognise and name shapes as part of the planned topics and in every day conversations with staff, for example, correctly naming the different shapes depicted on mats in the role play area. They are using size language well and understand the concepts such as big and small, empty and full. They

are able to complete simple problem solving exercises as they calculate how many children there are when one more joins the group. The children develop an awareness of information technology as they use a range of resources in the role play area, such as telephones, cameras, a microwave oven, and use programmable toys such as a keyboard. However, their understanding is limited as they do not have access to a computer.

Children are beginning to develop a sense of space and move around the nursery with control. They demonstrate good strength and agility as they skilfully manoeuvre wheeled toys and use the climbing frame. Children develop good levels of hand-eye coordination and show good dexterity as they use a variety of tools including pencils, crayons, paintbrushes, glue sticks and scissors.

Children are confident in their play and learning. They behave well and are beginning to show concern for others. They learn about cultural diversity as they celebrate festivals from their own culture and those of others through the planned topics. For example, they celebrated the Chinese New Year when they tasted Chinese food, the role play area became a Chinese restaurant and they performed a dragon dance. Children are motivated learners, are interested and actively take part in the wide range of activities provided.

They learn about the world around them as they complete topics on the seasons, investigating how things grow in spring and the properties of ice in winter. They learn about different animals and the countries they come from as they complete topics on Africa and have opportunities to look at more exotic creatures such as spiders and snakes brought to the setting by visitors.

Children enjoy and participate in an increasing range of children's songs and action rhymes and enjoy using a wide range of musical instruments to make their own sounds and music. They enjoy a range of craft activities and most children persist for prolonged periods of time to create the effect they desire, as demonstrated when they made their own story books. They use junk modelling materials to build models, helping them to develop an understanding of constructing in 2D and 3D.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals. The staff use their knowledge about children's individual needs, their interests and their families very effectively to help them to feel settled. Children develop their independence to a good level as they are encouraged to make choices as they choose activities and resources and put on their aprons before painting or playing in the water tray. Staff provide appropriate levels of support where necessary.

Systems are in place to ensure children with learning difficulties or disabilities receive the support they need to fully participate in all the activities and make good progress. The manager works closely with parents and other professionals to produce individual play plans to ensure the children's needs are recognised and met and their individual next steps in learning clearly identified and provided for.

Children are learning to take responsibility for their behaviour because the staff follow positive and effective strategies for helping children learn to manage their feelings and emotions. Children learn the boundaries and guidelines and are beginning to understand the consequences of unwanted behaviour. As a result children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. For example, they are learning that it is not appropriate to take someone's toy as

they will be upset. Staff are consistent and are good role models, having high regard for each other and the children. They use lots of praise and encouragement to promote good behaviour, which results in a very calm and pleasant atmosphere.

Extremely positive relationships have been established with the local school through the cluster group of the Early Years Partnership. The pre-school children make regular visits to the school, and the school children and the reception teacher make visits to the pre-school when the children share in activities together. The close relationships are effective in helping the children to make a smooth transition to school and prepare for their next steps in life.

The parents of new starters receive written information in the form of a prospectus and welcome pack and they are invited to make pre-start visits with their child. Registration forms are completed by parents to ensure each child's individual needs are known and accommodated.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Information about the Foundation Stage of learning is discussed with parents and activity plans linked to the areas of learning are displayed. Parents also receive written information about the planned activities and these include suggestions of how parents can continue the children's learning at home. They are kept well informed of their children's progress and staff exchange verbal information with parents at delivery and collection. The children's assessment files are kept on the premises and parents can access these at any time. These are given to the parents when the children leave along with a written report.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff organise the indoor learning environment very effectively to ensure children are able to move easily and safely, accessing their chosen activity and all areas of the curriculum. However, while children enjoy their outdoor play, this sometimes lacks purpose and the curriculum is not mirrored in the outdoor learning environment. The adult to child ratio and the effective grouping of children positively promotes children's care, learning and play, and provides all children with good support enabling the children to initiate their own play and learning well.

Appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are cared for by staff who are suitable and have the knowledge and understanding to promote children's all round development. Weekly staff meetings ensure staff have opportunities to plan effectively and discuss practice issues. There is a range of detailed policies and procedures in place which are used to support their good practice. However, while there is a clear uncollected child policy in place, this needs to be extended to include lost children and parents need to be informed of Ofsted's contact details. All requirements for record keeping are in place to meet the requirements of the National Standards. These include medication records, accident records, records of attendance, visitors book and individual children's details.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The children benefit from the qualified staff that are experienced and have a very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage of learning and the associated stepping stones. All staff understand and are involved in the planning and assessment process. They work extremely effectively as a team and are clear in their roles and responsibilities. They demonstrate a commitment to attending ongoing training to ensure their knowledge remains up to date. The manager has attended training on the new Early Years Foundation Stage as they begin to prepare for its introduction in 2008.

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 pre-school was asked to provide warm water at all basins in the cloakroom. The setting contacted the owners of the building, however, they were not prepared to install a second water heater. As a result, there has been no improvement to report on and warm water is still only available at one of the basins. This means some children wash their hands in cold water which does not fully protect their good health.

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

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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 the early years curriculum is reflected in the outdoor play activities (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure the uncollected child policy is extended to include lost children and Ofsted contact details are made available to parents.

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):

- extend children's access to information technology, in particular their use of a computer.

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