

Fountains Playgroup and Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400414
Inspection date	19 July 2007
Inspector	Christine Anne Rice
Setting Address	Fountains Children Centre, Fountains Community Primary School, Grantley, North Yorkshire, HG4 3PJ
Telephone number	01765 620019
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Registered person	Fountains Playgroup and Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Fountains Playgroup and Pre-School was registered in 1995. It operates from The Children's Centre, a Portakabin in the grounds of Fountains Primary School, in the village of Grantley near Ripon. It is managed by a voluntary committee. The children have access to an open-plan playroom, with toilet facilities, kitchen facilities and a quiet room adjacent. To the rear of the playroom the children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The group currently operates term time only, Monday, Wednesday, Friday 09.00 to 12.00 and Tuesday and Thursday 09.00 to 15.25.

The group is registered to care for 20 children and there are currently 36 children on roll aged from two years to under five years. This includes 26 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are suitable procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

There are five members of staff working with the children; three have relevant early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being are effectively underpinned by the maintenance of good clear accident and medication records, together with supporting policies and procedures. Children are well protected in the event of accidents because all staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications and there is an amply stocked and accessible first aid kit. Children learn effective hygiene routines and they develop an understanding of the importance of washing their hands appropriately, such as before snack time and after going to the toilet. They are quick to remind the adults to wash their hands after messy activities.

The children benefit from eating healthy nutritious food for snacks, such as toast and a selection of fruit, including slices of apple, pear and orange segments. The menu rotates and incorporates vegetables and dips with breadsticks and crackers, plus sandwiches, which the children make themselves. Children recognise when they are thirsty, such as when they have been playing in the outdoor sunshine, and they independently help themselves to water, which is always available in a flask at the side of the room. The setting operates a cafeteria system so that children may choose when they have snacks. In addition, they exercise their preference for a drink of water or milk, which further promotes their independence. Snack time is a sociable experience when the children sit together and happily chat with each other and staff.

All children, including those in receipt of nursery education, have good opportunities for fresh air, exercise and physical development as they have a free-flow system of play between indoors and outdoors. The children skilfully negotiate pathways when riding bikes, slowing down to avoid each other and then speeding up again when the space is clear. They are able to manage their bodies to create intended movement, for example, when lying down on their backs and pedalling a pretend bicycle and when crouching down to examine a worm. The children can construct by fitting train track together and then operate the train by pushing and pulling it along the tracks. They are beginning to develop fine motor skills as they handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control, such as pencils, scissors and dough tools.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and safe environment. The atmosphere is friendly, which enables the children to relax and independently pursue their interests and activities. There is good evidence of the children's play and activities, with attractive displays of their work, such as a large collage elephant, with various components, including cotton wool and sparkly material. Bright, child-friendly posters adorn the walls.

Children arrive to find an array of resources spread out on the tables in the main playroom and they develop independence as they freely choose their activities. Amongst the choices are, for example, the role play area, the book corner with cosy cushions, a farmyard, collage work, dough modelling, jigsaw puzzles and painting. Outdoors, the children enjoy equipment, such as bikes and scooters, plus sand and water play, a digging area and mark-making.

Good safety procedures safeguard the children. For instance, the daily carrying out of risk assessments ensures that the environment is safe for the children to play in. Any broken items

are discarded and sockets are covered. The front door is kept locked to prevent children leaving the premises alone and unwanted guests entering and the outdoor play area is securely enclosed with a sturdy fence. The children are closely supervised at all times by the staff. The children learn to contribute to their own safety by the regular practising of the fire escape plan, which is recorded. At registration, the children demonstrate their understanding of safety measures as they know why it is so important to take the register. They explain that the staff need to know who is present and must dial 999 in an emergency if anyone is missing.

The children's welfare is protected because there is a good standard of knowledge of child protection matters, including the procedures to follow in the event of a concern, within the setting. There is a written child protection policy, which is shared with parents in the policy file. In addition, there is a designated coordinator and most staff have attended child protection training. However, the policy does not include the contact details of the local child protection agencies.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The provision meets the needs of all ages attending by differentiating activities and incorporating the 'Birth to three matters' framework as well as the Foundation Stage in the planning. The children enjoy access to a very good range of activities and resources, which they freely choose. Choices include, for instance, various craft activities, such as collage, sand and water play, paint, dough modelling, books, jigsaws, the home corner, role play and dressing up clothes. Children are interested in all the activities and are eager to join in.

Children benefit from the caring staff, who are sensitive to their needs and very skilled at helping to settle and engage them. With such good relationships, children approach the staff very easily to talk to them and show them what they have been doing both at home and in the setting. Staff respond very positively, with bright expressive faces, which delights the children and gives them the confidence to continue. When, for example, children bring in pictures of the sunflowers they have grown, staff show genuine interest and ask enquiring questions, which encourages the children to think.

The children's creativity is developed through good opportunities to experiment with paint and craft materials. They successfully use glue spreaders in collage work to make bears, which ties in with the current theme of teddy bears picnic, and they use modelling tools to make buns for the picnic. When playing in the home corner the children imaginatively pretend to be dogs and become very involved in the role, moving around on all fours and barking. The children are happy and settled and enjoy a constructive balance of active and quiet times, from riding scooters outside to sitting down calmly to look at a book.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and children make good progress towards the early learning goals. All staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage, as those staff who have completed specialised training share their knowledge with the other staff in a very practical way, by demonstrating how to utilise the resources with the children to maximise their learning. Consequently, staff very capably provide activities which capture children's interests. All the staff contribute to the detailed planning, which provides a broad, balanced and purposeful curriculum, clearly linked to the early learning goals. The staff are aware of the learning intentions of the activities and make appropriate observations of the children, which are then transferred to the children's assessment profiles. Communication in the provision is good and so staff are clear on the next step for learning for each child, although these are not

routinely recorded in writing. The setting has an outdoor area, where the aim is to replicate as many of the indoor activities as possible. There is a good range of resources outside, although the lack of clear delineation between the different areas of learning is prompting a rethink of the organisation of this area.

Mathematical development is prevalent in the provision, with most children having good counting skills. Staff use natural opportunities to practise counting, such as at registration when the children demonstrate their ability to count way beyond 10. Children are able to do simple calculations, such as working out that four water pistols take away one is three and six plus one dough bun is seven. They recognise numerals as they run to the large number four, which is affixed to the outdoor fence. The children use size language very competently, appreciating that the sunflowers they grow are taller than Mummy; they place bears in sequence according to size and colour; and they understand positional language as they talk about putting icing on top of the dough cakes.

Children form recognisable letters and make good confident attempts to write their names on the pictures they paint and in the sand tray. The children learn to link sounds to letters when the staff sound out the initial letters in their names. They readily initiate conversations and use their imagination to good effect as they act out the 'Three Little Pigs' story with detailed recall. The children are enthusiastic about stories, books and nursery rhymes; they particularly enjoy guessing the links between props, such as a clock, with rhymes, such as 'Hickory, Dickory, Dock'.

Most children separate from their carers confidently and all of the children settle quickly to constructive activities. The children have a strong exploratory impulse and heartily tap the ground in their search for worms. Children are engrossed in their activities and highly involved, such as when they arrange the animals in the farmyard. The children form friendships within the group and have good relationships with the staff, whom they trust. They chat freely about their home life, such as their birthdays and the impending birth of their sibling. The children operate quite independently in the setting, choosing, for instance, when to have their snacks. They know the routines and are able to adapt their behaviour accordingly, such as when they sit quietly for registration.

Outdoors, the children use magnifying glasses to observe the movement of dragonflies, worms and beetles. The learning experience is extended when, prompted by staff, the children begin to think about what worms eat and whether they have any teeth. The children are able to use different tools for different purposes. For example, they choose a wheel to make patterns on the dough and they use a hammer to tap wooden shapes on to a board to make a picture. They use a mouse very skilfully as they complete simple computer programs and they have a sense of time as they talk about significant events, such as their recent birthday celebrations.

Children benefit from a range of activities which foster their creative development, such as painting, collage, musical activities and imaginative play. They are able to differentiate colours, enjoy hand-printing and exploring texture and materials, such as a 'gloop' mixture of flour and water, which they describe as 'sticky' and 'stringy'. A visiting music teacher guides the children as they experiment with the different sounds that various instruments, such as a tambourine and drum make. The children tap out simple rhythms and change the volume of the songs they sing from loud to soft.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children gain self-esteem because staff offer consistent praise and encouragement. Staff value what children say and do and this builds children's confidence. Because the staff know the children well, they are able to tailor their care according to their individual needs. Children learn about their community and the wider world through activities, such as visits to the local primary school or to the children's ward of the hospital, for which they raise funds. In addition, visitors to the group are welcomed, such as parents with new babies and firefighters. Children learn about the diversity of the world through access to a good range of resources, such as books, toys and dressing up clothes, which reflect positive images. This is supplemented through celebration of a range of festivals, such as Hanukkah and Chinese New Year. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcome in the setting, which has effective arrangements in place to assure their care, such as an appropriate policy and two coordinators. The staff work very successfully and closely with parents and professionals in meeting the children's needs and involve all the children in the setting in, for example, using makaton. Children behave well since the staff manage their behaviour positively and consistently and according to the children's level of understanding and maturity. They act as positive role models to encourage constructive behaviour and use stickers to reward children for many reasons, including helping to tidy up and sitting quietly.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. There are good opportunities for parents to become involved with their children's learning. For instance, twice a year there are parents' evenings, when parents can discuss their children's progress with their key worker and find out more about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning by bringing in items from home and by speaking to the children about their roles, perhaps as a builder, a nurse or a doctor. When children start the pre-school provision, parents provide a photograph of their children and information about what their children can do. Subsequently, the parents are involved in the assessment process as they record the children's achievements at home across all the areas of learning. They are kept updated as they are able to access the children's profiles at any time. Parents are kept informed of general activities through regular newsletters and information about current topics on the noticeboard. In addition, all policies are available to parents in the entrance. Parents enjoy positive relationships with the staff; they are welcome to make suggestions, such as at the committee meetings, which are held in parents' homes, and they assist with fundraising.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The environment is effectively organised and the setting profits from the support of an active and involved committee. The staff work well as an established team, which ensures seamless care for the children. They implement routines to enable children to benefit from a broad range of experiences. They consistently interact with the children and offer effective support and encouragement, which helps children feel secure and confident. There is a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place, which provide a structure for the safe and efficient management of the setting. All of the required documentation is in place, such as medication records and emergency contact details, and is stored securely in the interests of confidentiality. The registration and insurance certificates are prominently displayed on the noticeboard.

Robust recruitment procedures are followed to ensure that staff who work with the children are suitable to do so; for example, background checks are carried out and references taken up. Thorough induction procedures, which include the reading of the setting's policies, properly prepare staff for their roles. Adult to child ratios are generous and are always maintained to enable the children to receive good levels of adult support. Staff are dedicated and keen to develop their knowledge and skills by pursuing further training courses.

The leadership and management is good. The playgroup manager, who has a clear vision for improvements to the nursery education, oversees the planning of the curriculum. There are regular meetings of all the staff where previous activities are monitored and evaluated and new ones are planned. Communication is good as the staff discuss matters before the children arrive as well as throughout the session. All the staff have yearly appraisals that identify training needs and staff are encouraged to enrol on relevant courses. There is a commitment amongst the staff to further training and professional development. For example, some staff have already completed an introduction to the new Foundation Stage, whilst the remaining staff are already planning to undertake this training. Furthermore, two staff are about to embark on an early years degree course.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure that the children's details contain collection arrangements for the children and that parental permission is obtained for the administration of medication. Since the last care inspection, the setting has extended the registration details to include the names of people authorised to collect the children. In addition, the setting obtains signed parental permission for the administration of medication. These improvements impact positively on the children's health and safety.

At the last education inspection the setting was asked to improve assessment systems and the conveying of information to parents about the children's educational progress. Since the last education inspection, the setting has set up the 'on track' assessment system and arranges parents' evenings twice per year. These improvements have had a positive impact on the children's education.

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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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):

- develop child protection policy to include the contact details for the local child protection agencies.

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):

- continue to develop children's assessment records to plan and record the next steps in the children's learning
- continue to develop the outdoor area to delineate the six areas of 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