

Lane Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY236248
Inspection date	12 October 2007
Inspector	Karen Cockings
Setting Address	Burnlee Road, Holmfirth, HD9 2LE
Telephone number	07929255263
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Lane 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 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?

Lane Pre-School Playgroup opened in its current premises in 2001 although it had been registered for some years previously. The group operates from a single storey, detached building in the grounds of Upperthong Infant and Junior School, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire. There is one play room with adjoining toilet and kitchen facilities and fully enclosed outdoor areas. The setting serves families who live in the surrounding area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The provision offers sessional care between 09.15 and 11.45 and 12.30 until 15.00 every weekday during term time, except Fridays when it is open only for the morning session.

There are currently 50 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for early education. The setting supports a number of children with learning difficulties and has disabled access and toilet facilities.

The setting is managed by a voluntary management committee which is made up of parent representatives. A team of eight staff work directly with the children, five of whom have a

relevant early years qualification and two are working towards this. The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance, to which it is affiliated.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have opportunity to be outdoors at most sessions, which means that they are often playing in the fresh air and getting plenty of exercise. Staff ensure that there is a good variety of equipment outside to interest most children. For example, those who prefer less active play have access to construction toys and role play equipment. In fine weather many indoor activities, such as drawing and painting are brought outside. Children move freely and confidently around the play areas, steering wheeled toys carefully between obstacles and along the road way in the garden. They like to see how many jumps they can do on the small trampoline and learn new skills as they use bats and balls, stilts and hoops. Indoors they climb and balance on the slide and move their bodies in different ways as they crawl on their tummies underneath it. There are many opportunities for them to develop hand-eye coordination and manipulative skills as they use equipment such as pencils, paintbrushes, threading games and building bricks.

Children are cared for in a clean and comfortable environment, where staff take effective measures to protect them from the risk of infection. They check all areas, both indoors and outside, before children arrive and ensure that tables are thoroughly cleaned before foods are served. Notices are posted in the kitchen to remind adults about which cloths to use for different types of cleaning and the correct procedures to follow when preparing foods. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through daily routines, such as hand washing before they have snack and after using the toilet. Children's growing independence is promoted as toilet areas are easily accessible with colourful hand prints and posters displayed to remind them about hand washing. They are encouraged to put their hands in front of their mouths when they cough and to use tissues to wipe their noses.

Children enjoy well balanced and healthy snacks at each session. Younger children sit down together at snack time which helps to develop social skills, with supportive staff nearby to offer help if needed. A café system operates successfully for the older children so that their play is not interrupted and they can make choices about when they sit down to eat. They enjoy a good variety of healthy foods, such as fresh and dried fruits, cereals, vegetables and breadsticks. Drinks of milk, water or dilute juices are served and children can pour themselves drinks of water during the session if they are thirsty. Staff have a good awareness of any special dietary needs or allergies and attend specific training where necessary.

There are clear procedures for dealing with accidents and the administration of medication. Staff maintain all required records, sharing them appropriately with parents so that they are kept informed of significant events affecting their child's welfare.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in secure and welcoming premises, where staff take effective measures to protect children and to minimise risks. Outer doors are locked when children are present, except when they are playing outside, and perimeter gates are secured. Staff manage arrivals and departures well so that children cannot leave the building unobserved. They are deployed

effectively to ensure that children are well supervised both indoors and outdoors. Through a system of careful risk assessments and daily checks staff ensure that the environment and resources are safe for children's use. The setting is proactive in seeking advice about safety issues from the relevant authorities, such as writing for information about the chemical cleansers used and for advice regarding any new plants to ensure that they do not pose any risks to children. Safety equipment, including finger guards, socket covers and rubber matting on the steps, help to create an environment where children can move around freely and play in safety.

Children have access to a varied range of attractive resources, which are organised well so that children can make independent choices about their play. For example, many toys are stored on low level shelving and in boxes labelled with word and picture. Role play areas are attractive and well equipped, inviting children to play there and to use their imaginations. Staff conduct regular checks to ensure that equipment is safe and clean. Children learn how to use the environment and equipment safely because they are given gentle reminders from staff who are alert to potential dangers. For example, they talk to children about holding the hand rail and walking carefully down the steps to the outdoor play area. Children learn that although they can use the slide in different ways, they should not stand at the top of the A-frame and need to take care when turning around at the top. They learn about road safety as they use the cars and the zebra crossing in the outdoor area and during walks and outings.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff understand their responsibilities with regard to child protection. Procedures and guidance materials are updated to ensure that they reflect changes and include telephone numbers of relevant authorities if there are concerns. The policy is shared with parents as part of the information pack, and with new staff joining the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children quickly settle into the pre-school environment and most arrive eager to take part in activities there. Some rush in and hurry over to a favourite area before taking off their coats. They become familiar with daily routines, such as finding their name labels and attaching them to the board, and they are all given a warm welcome. Sessions are currently organised so that younger children attend at different times and a staged intake allows them to settle in gradually, with less possibility of children being upset. Staff get to know the children well and sensitively support their play. They give careful thought to the planning of the sessions to ensure that children of different ages are suitably supported. For example, they find that organising snack times in different ways for the younger and older children works well for all, enabling younger children to develop confidence and social skills, while allowing older children more independence and free choice.

Children take part in a good range of activities, both indoors and outdoors. The programme is well balanced, with opportunities for children to play freely and to participate in group activities. The environment is set out attractively, enabling children to select resources for themselves and stimulating their interest. Children form firm friendships with each other and learn how to play cooperatively together. They benefit from attentive staff who communicate well with them and observe them carefully to find out about their individual interests and abilities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and use their knowledge effectively to help children to progress

towards the early learning goals. Children are eager to learn and they take part in activities with enthusiasm. Many show sustained concentration as they persevere with an activity they enjoy, such as the development of a story in the role play area, or as they learn to use scissors. They are able to adapt their behaviour to suit different situations so that most children sit and listen at group times, yet are confident to share their news and ideas. They are beginning to understand the needs of others as staff explain to them about sharing and help them with turn taking. Children learn how to manage their own personal care, such as putting on their own coats and shoes, but are confident to ask for help if needed.

Many children use language well to communicate with others and to express their own needs. For example, they talk together about what masks they will be wearing for a Halloween party and describe a recent visit to the garden centre. Some are sufficiently confident to introduce themselves without prompting and to talk about their favourite toys. They like to join in with favourite songs and rhymes and listen intently to stories, especially when a puppet or toy is used to focus their attention. They use language well as they participate in imaginary play, giving instruction to their friends and describing what will happen next. There are opportunities for them to practise early writing skills as they paint and draw and use note pads in role play areas. They begin to recognise their own names and link sounds to letters, but children are not always encouraged to make their own marks and labels for their pictures. Their listening skills are nurtured as they sit quietly to listen to the sounds outside and think about what might be happening there.

Children are familiar with numbers and develop counting skills as they sing number rhymes together and during daily routines. For example, they count each other at group time and they count the number of pieces of 'pie' they have made in the home corner. Staff plan activities to promote awareness of number, such as hanging buckets on numbered hooks outside for children to place or throw items in and having numbered 'car parking spaces'. Children count the different vehicles passing their pre-school and make simple graphs to show how many they have seen. They identify different shapes as they play with jigsaws and construction toys and use mathematical language, such as taller and heavy as they compare height and weight.

Children's interest in the natural world is nurtured well. They notice what is happening around them and observe changes in the weather. As part of an animals topic they visit the local cattle market and they learn about what animals give us. A well resourced interest table encourages them to explore this further as they handle wool and a carton of 'eggs' and look at relevant books. They have observed caterpillars growing and changing into butterflies. Children use equipment, such as remote controlled toys, with great enthusiasm, learning how to make the toy change direction. Some also use the computer confidently to complete simple programmes. They have access to a range of materials for design and model making, including different types of building bricks and household materials, such as boxes and cartons. The setting is steadily developing the outdoor space and see this as a priority area for the future.

Staff plan and organise role play areas carefully to stimulate children's interest in imaginary play. For example, the table is set attractively and dolls are dressed and ready to be taken for a walk. There is a soft toy dog with its own feeding bowl and packet of dog biscuits. Children use these areas with lots of enthusiasm and delightful activities develop. For example, a child thinks that the dog has been sick so the children think about what to do next. They decide to call the doctor and to go to the hospital. There is lots of conversation and activity as the story unfolds. Children have opportunities to experiment with different media, such as paint and play dough. They mix colours together at the easel and are pleased when they see that they have made brown. Some creative activities are quite adult-led and do not allow for sufficient

free expression, although other opportunities compensate for this, such as the large scale painting outdoors.

Play areas are mostly used very effectively and staff understand what they hope children will achieve and learn as they play. Notices are displayed around the play room as reminders for staff and any visiting parents. Staff use resources well to extend children's learning and to develop language skills. For example, the use of puppets and dolls at group time helps to focus children and sparks off their interest. Staff interact warmly with children and use effective questioning to help them to solve problems, such as how to fit the train track together. They explain what is set out for children and have resources easily accessible so that they can make choices about their play. Focused and spontaneous observations of children help staff to find out what interests them and how to help them to move forward in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging at the setting. They see their work on display and like to look at collections of photographs about activities they have enjoyed together. Staff give them a warm welcome, talk and listen to them, encouraging them to share news about themselves. Children's awareness of their local community is raised through activities, outings and visitors to the group. There is a good relationship with the nearby school, which enables children to build links there even before they move on to this next phase in their lives. Children have access to resources and activities, which help them to find out about the wider society and to value similarities and differences. For example, they learn about Divali as they make clay pots and dress in traditional costumes, and a visitor comes in to talk to them about festivals and traditions within their family. Children take the group's teddy on holidays with them and bring postcards and photographs back with them for display and discussion. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The setting actively promotes inclusion, working closely with parents and other professionals in order to meet children's individual needs and to help them to participate fully. Staff know how to access advice if they have concerns about a child and are sensitive to parents' feelings. They value the support provided by inclusion and advisory workers, acting promptly to implement their recommendations. This helps to ensure that children are able to take a full part in the activities provided and to make progress in their learning and development.

Children are sociable and play harmoniously together. Staff are good role models for them, giving gentle reminders and encouragement to help children to learn about sharing. Children develop a sense of responsibility as they help to tidy away toys and to take care of their environment. They have been involved in making a 'Being helpful' book with photographs and comments from children about how they help at home and at the pre-school. Resources, such as empathy dolls and puppets, are used effectively to enable children to explore their own feelings and to consider the needs and feelings of others.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the life of the provision, either by becoming a member of the management committee, by helping as a 'rota' parent or by sharing skills or experiences with the children. The group produces informative leaflets to advise parents about the input they can make and the range of ways in which they can be involved. Information is shared effectively with them by means of attractively presented notice boards and newsletters. The group's policies and procedures are made readily available to them.

Parents are invited to share knowledge of their own children with their key worker and more formally on admission documents. This helps staff to understand children's starting points so that they can plan appropriately for them. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's development records by, for example, bringing in examples of mark-making and pictures children have made at home, or their own photographs and observations. There is a good range of general material on display about children's learning and a comprehensive information pack is also given to parents when children are admitted.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a well organised environment where well qualified and experienced staff work together effectively to promote their care, learning and welfare. Changes are relatively few within the team, which means that there is continuity for children and families. There are sound recruitment and vetting systems in place to ensure that staff appointed are suitable to work with children and have the necessary skills. The management committee maintains a good overview of what is happening at the setting, meets regularly and is firmly committed to the future development of the service. They are particularly interested at present in the further improvement of the outdoor spaces, working in conjunction with the local school.

Space and resources are organised well, providing a good range of stimulating activities to support children's learning and development. Policies and procedures underpin the smooth operation of the setting and are implemented well. These are currently under review to ensure that all are up to date and comply with current regulations. Record keeping is maintained well and records are stored securely.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager works directly with the children for much of the time, so she is able to oversee staff practice and offer support. She has many years experience and has attended a wide variety of additional training to enhance her skills. She is ably supported by sessional leaders and the rest of the staff team. Effective systems are in place for evaluating the provision, including staff appraisals and meetings. The setting values the support provided by early years advisors and works with them to identify training and action plans. This ensures that staff provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which helps children to make good progress towards the early learning goals.

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 agreed to ensure that work and photographs in children's records are consistently dated and to develop further the links between pre-school and home. Children's development records show that examples of children's work and relevant photographs are now dated. This ensures that parents and staff can see how children are progressing over time. Links with children's home and families are developed well. Parents are able to take an active role on the rota and by becoming members of the management committee if they wish. Staff provide information about activities that can be followed up at home and books of the setting's songs and rhymes are also produced. As a result, parents are able to feel more involved in their children's learning. This is also applicable to recommendations made at the nursery education inspection.

The provider also agreed to review the written statement on behaviour management to include reference to bullying. The policy has now been amended to include this, taking into account the ages of the children attending.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that the setting further develop the observation, assessment and recording of children's learning. Staff welcome advice from other professionals in this area and keep their systems of observation and assessments under review, to ensure that they are working effectively. They use focused and spontaneous observations of children to help them to identify the next steps in children's learning and to ensure that children are appropriately challenged.

The provider also agreed to increase parents' understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and their involvement in their children's learning and records of achievement. A good range of information is displayed for parents about the Foundation Stage to develop their understanding of the programme offered. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning in the ways outlined above. Children clearly benefit because good links with home are nurtured.

In addition, the provider agreed to extend further the opportunities for more able children to express their ideas and develop emergent writing skills and representation of numbers in everyday activities. Children have opportunities to develop early writing skills and to represent numbers as they draw, paint and access writing materials in the role play and other areas. Children are also involved in making books with collection of photographs and captions about the activities they have been doing. There are sometimes, however, missed opportunities to extend this further by encouraging older and more able children to practise early writing skills by making attempts to label their own work.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- continue to review and update policies and procedures to reflect current practice and any changes to regulations
- increase opportunities for children to express themselves freely and to develop creative skills.

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):

- consider further ways of using information gained in observation and assessment systems to increase challenge for older and more able children, for example, with regard to further development of writing skills.

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