



Belwood Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205689
Inspection date	23 November 2005
Inspector	Jill Scargall
Setting Address	22 High Street, Belton, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN9 1LR
Telephone number	01427 874776
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Registered person	Belwood 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?

Belwood Playgroup opened in 1992. It operates from several rooms in a public hall in the small village of Belton, in North Lincolnshire. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open 5 days a week, term time only. Sessions are from 9.00 to 11.30 Monday to Friday and 12.30 to 15.00 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Children access a small enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 42 children aged from 2 to under 5-years-old on roll. Of these, 16

children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup serves the local area and supports children with special educational needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

Seven part-time staff work with the children. Five of which, hold an appropriate early years qualification. The playgroup receives regular support from the Early Years Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are made welcome and looked after in an environment where close attention is paid to health and hygiene. Children are encouraged to use good hygiene practice with appropriate hand washing, after visiting the toilet, as well as before and after snack and messy activities. They are encouraged to wipe their own noses.

They develop an early understanding of healthy lifestyles, by being aware of the need for warm clothing and outdoor shoes when they go outside. The outdoor play area gives them an opportunity to enjoy fresh air when the weather is fine. Parents understand the policy with regard to sick children and their health is maintained by staff's knowledge of procedures and first aid training.

Children's dietary requirements are recorded and their individual needs met. Children have their snacks in small groups, where they sit together to enjoy a pleasant social occasion. However, there are several missed opportunities for staff to help the child gain independence by serving themselves, and by adults sitting with children to talk to them. There are also missed chances to promote healthy snacks. Drinking water is not available in the room at all times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Adults work hard to create a welcoming environment for children within the limitations of the premises. On-going risk assessments are carried out to safeguard children, but there is a poor amount of natural light in the main room and room temperatures fluctuate so that it is difficult to maintain a comfortable environment for play activities. The rest of the building is cold. Although the outdoor play area is a public area, it is made secure when used by children. They are closely supervised by staff.

There is sufficient equipment for all children, to ensure that routines may be followed and the children are able to participate fully in all daily activities. However, some resources are elderly, although adults try to make sure that all equipment is clean and regularly checked. They do this to ensure children's safety. Resources suffer from wear and tear as they are stored in an area which has communal access. Toys are rotated regularly so children can access them in the main room, but there are a limited number of toys that can be used independently at any one time. Children are

involved in tidying up. As a result, they develop a sense of ownership and independence.

Children are kept safe by the effective monitoring and recording of their arrival and departure. They, and their parents, are greeted appropriately and feel welcomed. Effective procedures are in place to make sure that children are collected according to parents wishes. Correct fire and safety precautions are in place, and an emergency evacuation plan is clearly visible to all. The children practice regular fire drills to ensure that they keep calm in the event of an emergency.

Children are well protected because staff are vigilant. The staff have good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the protection of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have warm relationships with staff that help them to feel they belong to the group. They are involved in the same planned activities as the older children. They are keen to become involved. A comprehensive record sheet is kept for younger children. This shows what they have achieved, the resources used and an evaluation of their activities.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make progress in all areas of learning, although some are less well addressed than others. There is a wide difference in staff's abilities to communicate with children and this affects all areas of learning. Some tasks are not always appropriately explained to children, yet at other times, staff build on children's interests and knowledge by carefully framed questions. The staff have encouraging and interesting conversations with the children. Staff are occasionally too directive in their eagerness to ensure that learning intentions are achieved; particularly with creative activities.

Children are polite to one another, they take turns and co-operate and want to be involved in activities. They are beginning to learn about their community and the world around them. They take part in discussions about their homes, pets, farm animals and fish. Staff bring visitors in to help children learn about the wider world, such as, pets being brought in to the group. They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books, and are aware that text is linked to pictures and carries meaning. However, there are few opportunities for children to link sounds and letters. For example, when identifying their names at snack time.

Children's mathematical development is supported by planned activities; they can "shop" and count themselves and items they are using for play, such as, blocks. However, on this occasion adults did not progress children's thoughts by asking them simple questions about what comes next, or by relating the "money" in the shop to the goods they were purchasing. Nor do they compare full and empty containers of sand. Daily routines are sometimes used to support counting and calculating. For example, children are line up for the toilet. Most children are good at recognising simple shapes, circle, triangle, and square.

They are developing good hand/eye co-ordination by regular use of equipment for cutting, painting and writing, and can access large play equipment daily. This helps them develop large muscle skills. They enjoy singing and using musical instruments and moving to music with rhymes like "wheels on the bus" and Christmas songs. they can access daily art and craft activities, but there are few chances for use of free expression or natural materials as in junk modelling.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

A well written policy for special needs supports children's learning. Steps are taken to meet children's individual needs, including planned activities. Staff liaise closely with parents and other professionals. However, not every member of staff is confident in supporting the learning of children with special educational needs. Staff promote some activities that teach children about the wider world but these, and the resources available, are limited.

Children are generally well behaved and well mannered. They know what is expected of them. Staff use consistent strategies to manage their behaviour. For example, they are willing to help tidy up before they have refreshments, as they know that snack time will follow. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents and staff work closely together to benefit the children by an exchange of information before they start in the group. Parents are provided with a useful written brochure, and they are given daily informal reports about their children's progress. Parents are supportive of the group. Those parents of children who receive nursery education are regularly informed about the term's topic activities. They receive information about the Curriculum guidance to the foundation stage. They are able to discuss their child's progress with staff and receive a written report before the child moves to school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Induction training, policies and procedures are generally in place and work in practice. This helps children remain healthy, as well as safeguarding their welfare. Overall, the needs of children are met.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The manager is supportive of staff and leads by example. She liaises with the committee and organises daily routines; ensuring that children have staff's attention by having a high ratio of adults to children. She has a clear purpose and direction and has implemented a system of regular staff meetings, where planned activities are discussed. There is a key worker system in place so parents can relate to a specific member of staff . Staff can access training courses, and the manager and the majority of the staff have a childcare qualification. However, some staff are inexperienced and there is a high staff

turnover. A lot of the staff are parents and move to other employment when their children go to school. This affects children's development, as new staff are initially unfamiliar with Curriculum guidance to the foundation stage. They are not experienced at applying this in practice to support children's development.

The manager is aware of the areas identified to improve the group, such as giving children more experience of imaginative and creative activities. She is working to achieve these aims. There are procedures in place to monitor and review the planning and evaluate children's activities. However, these are not always used to inform further planned activities. Children are not formally grouped for activities, but staff know the children well. They informally monitor their daily activities and encourage the children to take part in everything.

Improvements since the last inspection

The group were asked to amend the child protection statement to include sound procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or a volunteer. This information has been included in the policy, in order to maintain the safety of children. Each parent is given a copy of the child protection procedures.

The group were asked to include the safe monitoring of heating temperatures in the risk assessment. Heating is not monitored at present and the group do not have a room thermometer. On the day of the visit, the building was icy except for the main playroom. In order to keep children safe and comfortable, the group have agreed to monitor temperatures from now on.

At the last inspection of nursery education, the group were asked to increase opportunities in three areas; children's communication, comparison of number and problem solving, and resources for technology and multicultural awareness.

Staff are attempting to promote communication within the group both between children themselves and adult to child. However, a recurring theme throughout inspection has been the limited and missed opportunities for adults to ask open ended questions, to pursue children's answers by gently questioning and comment. They do not expand discussions with children. This is an issue which has not been fully addressed and it is an on-going consideration for staff training.

Children are encouraged to count in everyday situations. For example, the number of children in a group, and the blocks they are playing with on the floor. They handle "money" in the "shop" and count in rhymes, such as, "1,2,3,4,5, once I caught a fish alive."

A number of resources for technology have been provided for children's use, programmable toys and a computer keyboard. Children were also seen making "phone calls" and 'talking to mum on the phone'. Some activities involving use of technology have been incorporated into planned activities. Resources to promote multicultural awareness are still very limited. This is a recommendation of this report.

Complaints since the last inspection

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted. There have been no complaints to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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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):

- make sure that room temperatures are maintained at a comfortable level for children
- make sure that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- increase resources that reflect positive images of diversity.

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):

- increase staff's knowledge of the Curriculum guidance to the foundation stage
- increase opportunities for children to access creative and imaginative play through the use of natural materials including exploring colour, texture, shape and form in two and three dimensions
- provide opportunities for adults to use conversation and carefully framed questions to develop children's knowledge, and opportunities for children to communicate thoughts, ideas, and feelings in all areas of learning.

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