

Ancaster Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253474
Inspection date	18 July 2007
Inspector	Jane Williams
Setting Address	The Parish Hall, Ancaster, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG32 3PW
Telephone number	01400 230266
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Registered person	Ancaster Playgroup Committee
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?

Ancaster Pre-school Playgroup is a committee run group that was first established in 1968. The group operate from the parish hall in the centre of Ancaster. The group have the use of the foyer, main hall, kitchen, toilet facilities and a storage cupboard. There is an enclosed outdoor play area attached to the building. The majority of the children live in the village, however, it also serves some of the surrounding rural villages.

The group is open each weekday, except Thursday, during the school term from 09.00 to 12.00. There are currently 31 children on roll. This includes 24 children in receipt of nursery education funding for three and four year olds. There are currently no children attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and no children speak English as an additional language. There are five permanent members of staff, all of whom have relevant childcare and education qualifications. There is a bank of relief staff. The group receives support from the Lincolnshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and is a registered charity.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean environment and staff are vigilant in ensuring appropriate hygiene procedures are followed. Children learn about good hygiene through daily routines such as washing hands after using the toilet and before eating. They are beginning to understand the importance of personal hygiene to prevent the spread of germs and infections. In the main, clear systems are in place to ensure the well-being of children in the event of illness or accident. Accident records clearly record the incident, the treatment given and contain parental acknowledgements of entries. Written consents to obtain emergency advice or treatment are obtained from parents at the time of admission. Staff are suitably qualified in first aid. Records of medication are kept with written permissions in place. However, parent's signatures to acknowledge entries are occasionally missing.

Children are well-nourished and are encouraged to learn about healthy eating. Children have the option to bring a snack from home or have snacks provided by the setting. Children choose from a variety of fruit, such as grapes, raisins and apples. They have opportunities to understand about foods that are good for us through activities, such as cutting out pictures of nutritious foods from magazines. Children do not become thirsty as they are provided with a drink of milk or water at snack time and have free access to water from the dispenser throughout the session. Children benefit from good opportunities to play outdoors. They have fun running and climbing on large equipment in the outdoor play area. Bean bags are provided indoors so that children are able to rest or sit quietly when they wish to.

Children's physical development is good because they are encouraged to find different ways of moving. When listening to stories they pretend they are worms wriggling across the ground. They enjoy climbing and balancing on the climbing frame and coming down the slide. Spatial awareness is developed as they crawl between the bars of the climbing frame. Children delight in running races and express an interest in sport because it provides them with energy. Children have good opportunities to use both large and small equipment. They take pleasure in using brooms to sweep away the leaves and have good access to using small equipment, such as scissors and glue sticks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in a safe and welcoming environment. As parents enter the setting they are able to read useful information about the setting on the parent's notice board. The main room has display boards at children's height level, so children feel valued as they can easily see their own work displayed. Children are able to play, learn and relax in a well-organised space. They can freely and safely move between different activities. Toys and equipment are stored well so that children can identify and access toys easily. The outdoor area is secure and staff regularly check the area to ensure there are no hazards so that children can play safely. Children have good opportunities to play with equipment that is well-maintained and clean.

Children's safety is promoted well because positive steps are taken to minimise hazards. Risk assessments are conducted and reviewed. The premises are kept secure and visitors are closely monitored using a record book showing times of arrival and departure. Clear and detailed

procedures are in place in the event of a child being lost or not collected. Children learn about safety through regularly practising emergency escape plans and through following road safety steps when on outings. Children's welfare is enhanced through the staff's good knowledge of children protection issues and an appropriate safeguarding policy and procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well and are happy in the setting. Through good organisation of activities, children arrive at the setting and are able to immediately start playing. This encourages children to happily separate from parents and carers. Children feel at home because clear routines are in place and they demonstrate confidence in making choices about the activities they wish to take part in. A good range of both free and adult-led play is provided to encourage children's development in all areas. Children enjoy engaging in conversation with one another and with staff. Language and number skills are developed as they play games. They are able to create their own imaginative worlds through playing with dolls houses, small vehicles and road maps. Singing familiar songs and playing musical instruments helps promote children's creativity. As they play in sand and water they are able to explore and investigate. Staff members ask questions to encourage children to think about what they are doing. Children are encouraged to be independent. They help themselves to toys and equipment, putting items away when they have finished with them. Staff provide roles for children to develop their confidence. Children are asked to hand out number cards, help tidy up and make decisions on whether they need coats when playing outdoors. Children relate well to staff who are attentive to their needs. Staff are using 'Birth to three matters' framework to support their planning and observations.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning in nursery education is good. Children are interested and motivated in the activities provided. They happily engage in conversations and have developed friendships. Through praise and encouragement children's confidence is enhanced. They are beginning to learn how to control their own behaviour through discussions with staff. Children demonstrate independence as they confidently make decisions about the activity they wish to take part in. Children are able to make good progress in communication, language and literacy. They talk to one another and to staff about what they are doing and how things work. There are good opportunities to develop listening skills as they take part in sound matching games and playing musical instruments. Children enjoy spending time in the book corner, reading alone, with a friend or in groups with a staff member. Free access to writing materials on the writing table and in role play allow children to make marks and practise writing their names. Children are able to make good progress in mathematics as they learn about numbers in a variety of interesting ways. They delight in counting how many times a large number dice in the centre of a parachute goes up into the air as they lift the parachute together. Ladybird number cards and a washing line provide opportunities for children to order numbers. They count to see how many cups of water it takes to fill a container. Whilst playing board games, children count in order to see who is winning and consider who has more than or less than. They learn about measurement as they create a beanstalk from hand prints to show their own height. However, activities are not always extended to create sufficient challenge for all children.

Children have good opportunities to make sense of the world. They have fun exploring how water moves through a water channel with the aid of a pump and they consider and talk about what is happening. A small garden in the outside play areas provides children with the chance to grow plants and vegetables. As they go on nature walks they collect natural materials to use

in collages. They learn about everyday technology as they play on the talking computer and use cameras to take pictures. Through comparing photographs of themselves as babies and as they are now, they begin to understand and have a sense of passing time. They learn about other cultures and beliefs through celebrating a variety of festivals. Children enjoy creative opportunities. They have fun cutting out pictures from magazines and sticking them onto paper plates. They use sand and glitter to create their own pictures. A good selection of musical instruments means children are able to have great fun making different sounds and learning to copy a beat. Their imagination is developed as they pretend they are at school in the role play corner.

Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and effectively plan a broad curriculum covering all areas of learning. They provide activities that children enjoy and are interested in. Useful observations are carried out and these are used to inform assessments and children's achievements in line with the stepping stones and early learning goals. However, assessments do not clearly identify children's next step and therefore the planning of activities does not always include challenge and extension for individual children in each area of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern and equality of opportunity is actively promoted. An appropriate policy is in place. Staff provide a warm welcome to parents and children as they arrive in the setting. Children have opportunities to learn about their own local community through regular trips to local shops, the local school and from visits from people in the community, such as the police. A close relationship with the local school help children to prepare for the next stage of education. Through activities and celebrating a variety of festivals, children are able to learn about the wider world. They enjoy trying foods and looking at homes and how people live from different countries. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed and provided with appropriate support. Staff are good role models as they encourage children to be considerate. Children are well-behaved and respond well to staff who are sensitive in their approach when dealing with behaviour issues. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. A monthly information sheet is sent out with details of the themes covered. Ideas for parents to help their children continue with their learning at home are displayed on the notice board. Parents have regular opportunities to discuss their children's development with staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well-cared for by staff who demonstrate commitment. They are keen to develop their own knowledge and skills and attend training to achieve this. The setting has robust recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure the well-being of children. Staff are deployed well so that children's learning and development is supported. In the main, records are appropriately maintained and a good range of policies underpin the management of the setting. Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager works closely with the committee and curriculum advisor to ensure a clear sense of purpose and direction. Action

plans are in place to provide continual monitoring and improvement. Part of the monitoring procedure involves sending out questionnaires to parents in order to gain their views and opinions. Regular meetings and informal talks ensure staff are supported in their training needs and enable them to work well as a team.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were made. The setting was asked to provide children with a greater choice of healthier options at snack time and ensure that times of departure are recorded in the visitor's book. Children now choose from a selection of fruit on offer and staff ensure times of departure are recorded in the visitor's book. As a result outcomes for children have improved.

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):

- consistently ensure parental signatures to acknowledge entries in the medication records are obtained

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):

- further develop use of assessments to clearly identify each child's next step to ensure they are challenged and extended in all 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