

Brocton Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218103
Inspection date	03 December 2007
Inspector	Elaine Poulton
Setting Address	Village Hall, Old Acre Lane, Brocton, Stafford, ST17 0TW
Telephone number	01785 661798
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Registered person	Brocton 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?

Brocton Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1967. It operates from the main hall in Brocton Village Hall. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area. The playgroup serves the local area and surrounding area.

The setting is registered for a maximum of 35 children between two and five years of age. There are currently 24 children on roll, of these there are six children in receipt of funding for nursery education. The pre-school group has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disability.

The group opens four days a week Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday during school term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00.

The setting employs six staff to work with directly with the children. Four staff including the manger hold appropriate early years qualifications to Level 3. Parents help on a rota basis. The setting receives support from the local authority early years unit and the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through planned routines. Children know that they have to wash their hands after messy activities and 'flush and wash' after using the toilet. They understand that they use moist wipes on their hands to prevent germs spreading. For example, before snack time they sing along happily 'this is the way we wash our hands' and then say 'because we don't want germs in our tummy's'. Children are encouraged to put their hand to their mouth when they cough and to use tissues to wipe their nose. All children know that they put their used tissues in the waste paper bin, and they know this is different to the 'paper recycling bin'. Staff have Basic Food Handling and Hygiene Certificates and follow effective procedures such as routinely cleaning food preparation worktops and tables with antibacterial spray before snack time. They also use antibacterial gel on their own hands. As a result children's awareness of good hygiene practice is consistently promoted.

Children benefit from staff who have knowledge in first aid. The setting has clear procedures for recording accidents and administration of prescribed medication. Should a child become ill or sick whilst at the playgroup they are well cared for until the parents' earliest arrival. Parents are requested to keep their child at home if they are unwell. This ensures that contact with other children is kept to a minimum to prevent the spread of infection. Written consent is obtained from parents for staff to seek emergency medical advice or treatment where necessary. This ensures children's continued good health is well supported in the setting.

Children benefit from a healthy diet and are offered a good variety of healthy snacks. For example, fresh fruit such as tomatoes, blueberries and apples are offered alongside toast or hot buttered crumpets at snack time. In addition, they have a choice of milk or water. This is a social time where staff sit with the children, and encourage them to talk about the different foods they are tasting. Children have access to a jug of water and beakers on a tray in the play room throughout the session should they become thirsty. Staff ensure children's individual needs are shared with parents, and all dietary and health requirements are recorded on children's individual record forms. This promotes healthy eating.

All children have good opportunities for physical play and activities outside. They enjoy active outdoor play in the fresh air, especially pedalling bikes and chasing games. Children are encouraged to bring in their Wellington boots to ensure they can enjoy walking outside when the grass is wet. There are quieter activities planned for those children who choose to be less active such as reading books in the tent or chalking on the concrete slabs. They have good opportunities to climb, run, ride on wheeled toys, and play on large equipment such as the climbing frame, as this is available to them every session in the main hall. This ensures the development of their physical skills and a healthy attitude to exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly welcomed into the setting. Children are kept safe by a staff team who place a high emphasis on safety and security in the group. They ensure that visitors to the playgroup are closely monitored, all being required to produce identification which is checked carefully and to sign a visitors book before gaining entry. Staff ensure they maintain an accurate daily record of children's, staff and visitors' attendance.

Children use a wide range of safe developmentally appropriate resources. They play in a safe environment which is well organised and resourced providing as much choice as possible. Toy, games and equipment are well presented to enable children to self-select. There is a varied range of resources stored at low-level, in clear plastic boxes all of which are clearly labelled. This ensures children have access to resources that are clean, safe and well maintained.

Risks are limited through effective procedures, including restricted access to the kitchen off the main hall through the use of safety gates and lock internal doors and key locks on external doors. Premises checks are undertaken regularly to maintain the safety and security of the pre-school group. The outdoor area is secure and staff closely supervise groups of children during outside play sessions. This ensures they remain safe.

Staff consistently and clearly explain safe practices during the session. For example, at snack time when spreading butter on toast the children are reminded not to put plastic knives into their mouths. Planned themes such as 'People who help us' include inviting a 'lolly-pop lady' to the group to talk about crossing roads safely. The setting has a 'zebra crossing and traffic lights' which are used in activities to help children to learn about safe places to cross the road; and as children are playing on bikes and wheeled toys outdoors they are given clear reminders not to 'bump' into other children. Fire fighting equipment is well maintained and emergency evacuations are practiced regularly. This means that children are gaining an good awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Most staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and follow the correct procedures to record existing injuries and report concerns to the Local Safe Guarding Children Board. There is a clear procedure in place to follow if there is an allegation made against a member of staff. Ongoing training is in place to ensure all staff gain appropriate awareness of child protection issues. The child protection policy is shared with parents. These measures promote children's care and welfare in the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are well settled in the pre-school's warm and welcoming environment. Practitioners' consistent interaction and effective support helps build positive relationships. Children thoroughly enjoy their time at pre-school because staff spend valuable time with the children, observing them whilst they play and gathering information from parents. An effective key person system is in operation and staff have a extensive knowledge of children's individual needs. Children arrive, take part in registration and then settle quickly into the daily routine. They have an excellent range of planned and impromptu learning experiences open to them. They approach practitioners freely and chat happily about what they are doing. Effective and appropriate praise is evident, particularly for the new and younger children which helps them to feel secure. This means children are eager to play and learn.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is used effectively to enhance play opportunities for the younger age group. Staff interact successfully with the children and engage them in purposeful play. Planned activities take account of the age and stage of each child to ensure that they become actively involved in their play and development. This professional approach to planning and observation promotes children's next steps in their individual learning exceptionally well.

The children's development of communication and language is particularly well promoted by staff through lively conversation, appropriate questioning techniques and individual attention. Children are prompted, encouraged and praised by staff for anticipating, thinking through and responding. For example, during registration time children talk about the weather and how it's 'drizzling' outside. They participate in activities enthusiastically. For example, they eagerly discuss which clothes 'Weather Bear' should be wearing and then help select the most appropriate items of clothing. Children are well supported through staff's introduction of an excellent range of resources and imaginative ideas which are fun and exciting. Consequently, children are developing their communication skills exceptionally well.

Children listen in wonderment to the story of 'Weather Bears' adventures. They are mesmerised as items from the 'blue tin' are revealed and described to them. Practitioners are animated and demonstrate expertise in their delivery of stories and tales. Children are excited to explore outdoors with their peers, they have fun holding hands, rolling hoops and making marks with chalks on the concrete slabs. They have excellent opportunities to take part in art and craft activities. Children experiment with a wide range of materials and textures. For example, glue, paint, water and sand which helps them represent their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. They play happily together using resources such as role play equipment and dressing up clothes which are both suitable to their age and stage of development and fun. Children play well together and companionably with staff. Staff are actively involved with the children. For example, staff support children to develop their small movements as they complete intricate work with sequins and large physical skills as they practise balancing and climbing on a large inflatable ring.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff team have developed their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan and provide a varied range of stimulating play and learning opportunities under each area of learning. The learning intention is recorded and links to the stepping stones and early learning goals so that all aspects are covered. Staff record the next steps for each child's future development. The evaluation of activities and teaching methods are developing well to show the impact of planned activities and daily routines on the children. This helps to inform future planning.

Plans are flexible and allow staff to spend the majority of their time working directly with the children. Differentiation is not always highlighted in the written plans, although in every day practice staff are aware of children's age and individual stage of development. Staff use effective methods to maintain children's interest. They ask appropriate questions to help them gauge the level of children's understanding. Most challenges extend children's intellectual development suitably. They use successful strategies to engage children. For example, their enthusiasm and attention is maintained through imaginative ideas, lively activities and discussions such as 'Weather Bear' and 'Happy Hedgehog' which in turn encourages their participation.

Initial assessments to show children's attainment on entry to the pre-school group are basic but clear. Staff have developed the practice of recording their observations on the children's progress profiles and the development records clearly show a complete overview of their achievements. These records enable staff to make accurate progress reports to parents.

Behaviour is well managed by consistent methods. Children are encouraged to respond to staff with 'please' and 'thank you' and are praised and rewarded for their achievements. They are aptly reminded about good manners through the introduction of a helpful pre-school song.

Children are consistently told 'That's amazing' and 'Well done, good try'. This in turn reinforces good behaviour and results in children being well behaved.

Children show a sense of belonging and are motivated to learn. They are friendly and confident to try new activities and speak in a familiar group. Children behave well and show care and concern for each other. They are encouraged to develop their personal independence by managing their outdoor clothing. Daily routine opportunities, such as snack time is always used appropriately to encourage children to give out plates and cups and to serve food and pour their own drinks.

Children have good opportunities to use a wide range of writing materials and resources. They make recognisable marks on their drawings and can recognise labels of their own names, and some of the other children's names. They are learning to sound out the initial letters in their name. They are developing their skills to speak clearly and to make themselves understood. They are totally absorbed in the stories of 'Weather Bear' and his adventures on the barge, washing the car and riding a motorbike. They select books for pleasure and use the book area individually or in small groups. They look at books and discuss their favourite stories.

Children are beginning to develop an understanding and use of numbers. They eagerly join in with number rhymes and songs. They are progressing with problem solving using addition and comparisons with mathematical language. For example, during registration they count how many children and adults are present and a member of staff writes the numbers on a board. Activities are then extended for children to identify the written number from a 'number line'. This consolidates their learning and helps them to recognise that numbers represent sets of objects, people or things. Children experience weighing and measuring out ingredients for 'peppermint creams and Christmas puddings'. They demonstrate that they have a good understanding of shape and size. For example, they identify and match the shapes and become absorbed in completing jigsaws.

Staff encourage the children to discover the natural world through planned themes, discussions and art work. Children explore and investigate nature. For example, they look at and experience frost forming on the fence, lifting a sheet of ice and watching it shatter when its dropped. This activity is further extend as children learn about thawing, melting and dissolving ice. They explore mini-beasts and are interested in spiders webs. Children have good opportunity to access every day technology, including a computer. They are developing their skills using the mouse and are developing confidence in selecting the right answer when playing number games. They widen their understanding of their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people by inviting 'people who help us' to the group. For example, a paramedic to talk about bandaging and dressings; and a fire fighter to talk about keeping safe.

Children express themselves well through role play. They have ample opportunities to build and construct with blocks and join train tracks together. They experience a range of materials such as 'gloop', sand, soil, water and spaghetti. They make their own musical instruments, learn the noises different containers make and how sounds can be changed.

Planned art and craft activities help children to express their ideas, however some adult-led activities offer fewer opportunities for children to be creative. They use all of their senses, through first-hand experiences such as smelling and tasting different foods, listening to shells and wind chimes, watching sun catchers and threading different materials onto a topiary tree.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a strong understanding of equal opportunities and use this to introduce activities to interest children in different people's cultures and family lifestyles. For example, they have good opportunities to listen and talk to invited visitors, such as a paramedic and a fire fighter. There are good procedures to ensure that children have meaningful opportunities to learn about cultures and beliefs that differ from their own through planned themes and discussions. For example, parents are invited in to talk to the children about 'what their family does over the weekend', and 'how they celebrate events' such as Thanks Giving and Diwali. Children are provided with resources and activities that promote positive images of gender, ethnicity, age and disability. For example, books, dolls, jigsaws, small world toys and imaginative and roll play resources, all of which are easily accessible. They begin to use basic sign language and join in with the 'Colours of the rainbow' song. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The setting's special educational needs co-ordinator demonstrates a good understanding of referral procedures, working closely with other professionals to support children with additional needs. There is a good level of support ensure that all children receive individual 'one-to-one' attention so that their needs are effectively met. Staff understand the importance of first seeking parent's consent before involving and working with other agencies or professionals. They endeavour to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disability in consultation with their parents, ensuring that space, resources and activities are planned effectively so that all children are included and have equal access.

Children are learning about caring for each other and the environment through being introduced to stories and news paper items such as the hedgehog with a broken leg. They are rewarded with certificates for being kind and helpful. For example, one child was presented with a certificate for making sure all that children had some fruit at snack time and another child received a certificate or offering to carry a resource box without being asked. Mediums such as the 'Weather Bear' and 'Happy the hedgehog' are used effectively to open discussions and describe a wide range of feelings. Children are learning how to play co-operatively with others by taking turns and sharing popular resources. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with fairly and sensitively through discussions and clear explanations. Children are praised, rewarded and consistently encouraged to behave well, this in turn promotes self-esteem and reinforces good behaviour.

Children benefit from a staff team who have developed good working relationships with parents. For example, parents are invited to offer their support as parent/helpers during sessions and form part of the Committee. Parents are able to speak to their child's key person on a daily basis. They receive regular updates informing them of daily routines and weekly activities. Each new child to the group has a 'This is me' profile, and this helps staff to listen and record parents' accounts of their child's development and any concerns, wishes, or individual needs. This is also used as a starting point to plan for younger children's play and development. 'Feedback' appointments are arranged on an individual basis and newsletters and questionnaires are posted regularly. This ensures children's individual needs are met.

There is a written complaints policy. This is to ensure parents are aware of the settings procedure should they wish to make a complaint.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery funded education are good. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved with their child's learning. Each parent shares basic information which is used as a starting point for children's learning. Practitioners inform the parents of their child's progress towards the early learning goals in the form of a written report. Weekly plans of the six areas of learning are posted on the notice board. This includes the activities their child will be involved in at pre-school. This enables parents to encourage and support their child's learning.

Parents stated that their children enjoy coming to the pre-school group and they enjoy helping out when on the parents' rota. They commented on the relationships between 'parents and staff' being very good. They said they were pleased with the range of information they receive from the setting that helps them to feel a part of their child's learning. They reported that the group is "very well structured and there is a very dedicated staff team who do lots with the children".

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting has robust vetting procedures in place for those having direct contact with children. This means that the pre-school group provides a safe and friendly environment, where children's general well-being is well promoted.

The pre-school group do not have sole use of the Village Hall and so staff work very hard to ensure the environment is made welcoming and interesting for children when they arrive. Space is well organised and children have good opportunities to move around freely, play and develop. Staffing levels and adult to child ratios are well maintained and exceeded in most circumstances. All staff are valued and respected for the different skills and knowledge they bring to the setting. There is a good commitment to staff development and training, and staff are fully aware of their responsibility to provide a safe, stimulating and caring environment for children. Appropriate child-centred training is encouraged. For example, all of the staff team hold a current first aid certificate. This benefits children's all round development and care.

Registers of daily attendance are complete and well maintained. All required documentation is made readily available for inspection. There are a comprehensive range of policies place and procedures comply with changes in legislation. This means that children's welfare is suitably promoted in the setting.

Leadership and management is good. There is a forward thinking and supportive management structure and a focussed staff group who are all committed to improving the quality of care and learning. Discussions and staff meetings take place regularly to monitor and evaluate the funded nursery education and identify any areas for improvement. Staff appraisals are carried out to identify individuals strengths and areas for professional development. The group work closely with other professionals, such as the local authority early years unit and act upon advice given.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four recommendations from the last inspection. To ensure that children are offered snacks that meet their individual needs; to ensure that parents always sign the accident book;

to include in the child protection policy the procedure when an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff and to provide parents with the name, address and telephone number of Ofsted as part of the complaints procedure.

The setting has produced an action plan and the Committee has successfully introduced checks and measures to ensure children are provided with a greater variety of healthy fruits and snacks to meet their individual needs; parents are reminded to sign the existing accident book when their child has had an accident recorded; the existing child protection policy has been reviewed and relevant information regarding allegations against members of staff has been added and staff and parents have received the appropriate information; as part of the complaints procedure the Committee has added Ofsted's contact details as part of a typed notification sheet to parents and carers. This means children's health, safety and welfare is promoted in the setting.

Nursery Education.

There was one area for improvement from the last inspection. To improve opportunities for children to develop calculation skills during practical every day activities.

Staff discussed the importance of encouraging children to develop their skills during tidy-up time and snack time and how to focus on calculation skill for pre-reception children. The Committee agreed to a termly budget for books, jig-saws, computer games to develop children's calculation skills. Consequently, this means that children have good opportunities to access a wide range of activities and resources to help develop their mathematical skills.

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

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):

- develop further knowledge and awareness of child protection procedures.

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):

- develop assessments further to show children's attainment on entry to the group and planning to show how activities are differentiated for individual children
- increase further the opportunities and challenges to develop children's creative ideas and imagination during adult focused activities.

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