

Malvern Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253559
Inspection date	17 July 2007
Inspector	Gill Ogden
Setting Address	William Farr School, Lincoln Road, Welton, Lincoln, Lincolnshire, LN2 3JB
Telephone number	07955638365
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Malvern 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Malvern Playgroup opened in 1997 at a self-contained portable building on the site of William Farr School, Welton, Lincolnshire, after operating for many years from the scout hut in the village. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area with part safety surface and part grassed areas and some fixed play equipment. The group is open each weekday from 09:00 until 11:45. A lunch club operates on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays between 11:45 and 12:55. The group serves the local community and adjacent villages.

The group are registered to care for 20 children and there are currently 23 children on roll, including 14 children who are funded for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group accommodates children with learning difficulties/ disabilities.

Of the six core staff who work with the children, three have a relevant early years qualification and two are working towards one. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment where close attention is paid to their health needs. Procedures such as using different coloured cloths in the kitchen and toilet areas ensure that the environment is kept hygienically clean. Information is displayed for parents which tells them the exclusion periods for common childhood illnesses. Parents are also reminded in newsletters about providing children with sun hats and putting on sun cream in hot weather. Children are supported well to learn about the importance of hand washing after using the toilet and before eating. Paper tissues are placed at a level where children can help themselves easily when they need to wipe their noses and they know how to dispose of them. These routines contribute effectively towards minimising the opportunities for cross-infection. All staff are aware of any children's individual health needs and meet them through following procedures discussed with parents.

Children get plenty of fresh air and exercise through playing outdoors every day except when the weather is exceptionally poor. They develop strong bodies and good co-ordination by throwing and catching balls, climbing and riding and manoeuvring scooters and tricycles. They learn to control their bodies well through imaginative movement such as pretending they are pushing their way through long grass in line with animal hunt stories.

Fresh drinking water is constantly available to the children and they access it freely for themselves especially after they have enjoyed outdoor play. Daily snacks consist of pieces of fresh fruit and toast accompanied by milk, water or fresh fruit juice. Snack times are a social occasion which staff enjoy along with the children demonstrating the importance of regular eating and drinking. Any special dietary needs are rigorously monitored. Children learn about their bodies' health needs by, for example, talking about what is good for their teeth and going to the dentist.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in safe and suitable premises where regular risk assessments are carried out to monitor ongoing safety. The building is well-maintained and is being redecorated imminently. All the necessary safety equipment is in place and functioning and procedures support children's safety effectively. Children learn to keep themselves safe and well as a result of practising fire drills, following road safety procedures when they go for walks into the village and because staff prompt them about being careful as they move around in the premises and outdoors. Visits from, for example, fire fighters also help them to understand dangers in the home and community. Toys and play equipment are kept in good condition and are suitable for their purpose.

Children are further safeguarded because staff have a solid understanding of their child protection responsibilities and this is made clear to parents. Key staff members have attended recent training and are experienced in dealing with issues in this field.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the group. They have warm and caring relationships with staff and enjoy a range of activities that help them develop emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually. Children of all ages are developing high self-esteem which is demonstrated through, for example, their pride in showing and talking about items they have brought in to the group. Children quickly learn the daily routines and independently choose activities and select resources to play with. They particularly enjoy outdoor play and are supported by staff to spend as much time as possible outdoors. Staff are using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to reflect their planning and assessment for the younger children. However, at certain times in the year, when there is a very distinct gap in the abilities of the oldest and youngest children, children are not grouped appropriately to ensure the needs of the youngest are taken into consideration fully enough.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most staff have a generally good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn. This enables them to provide a variety of activities that attract children's interest. Plans show the learning intentions for the focus activity but not all staff have the skills to encourage children to reinforce and reflect on their learning through other activities. Staff are aware that the systems they currently use for planning and assessment do not always link clearly enough to the stepping stones which makes it harder to identify the next steps for individual children and are currently receiving some outside help to rectify this. However, large group activities are fruitful for this age group of children, whatever their ability or need, because the children behave well and most staff are present at these times.

Children are making generally good progress towards achieving the early learning goals. They persevere quite well with tasks and learn to share and play co-operatively together. They are happy to wait for their turn and watch what others are doing whilst they are waiting, for example, during a marble painting activity. Children enjoy books and handle them carefully. They recognise their own name and some recognise others' names, helping them to find their place at the snack table. Children enjoy the actions and sounds they are learning in phonics activities and are keen to trace on worksheets the current letter they are practising. They use number fairly confidently to count such as identifying how many children are present at register time and begin to calculate through singing songs and rhymes like 'Five Little Ducks'. Children learn about change and growth through, for example, considering the weather each day, growing sunflowers from seed and baking. They enjoy pretending to be animals, recalling the sounds they have learned that various animals make and how they move. Their designing and making skills are challenged through activities such as staff suggesting that they make a vehicle of their choice from a range of recycled materials. Children are developing good small hand skills through threading, cutting, pasting, painting, drawing and doing puzzles and construction. All children thoroughly enjoy using their imaginations in role play activities and dressing up, seeking adults' involvement in their play. They help themselves to musical instruments and pretend a tambour is a 'big bass drum', relating it to their own experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is fostered. All children are made welcome in the group and useful information is gathered from parents to help staff to meet children's individual needs. Staff work closely with other agencies to ensure all children are included well and any additional needs children may have are met appropriately. There is a range of resources available for children to use as part of their everyday play which helps them develop positive attitudes towards all members of society and the wider world. Children also enjoy activities such as celebrating Rosh Hashanah and the European Day of Language which helps them understand differing cultures. They take part in national events such as Comic Relief and go on local visits which supports their understanding of their own culture and help them feel part of the community.

Children behave well and use good manners, for example, at snack time when they say please and thank you. Staff work hard to ensure a variety of methods are used to encourage children to behave well, especially those who have been identified as struggling to understand how to behave desirably.

Relationships with parents regarding children's effective continuity of care is good. Some families who have complicated lives are very well supported by the group and all parents comment positively on the friendliness of the staff and how happy their children are. Parents receive regular newsletters and an informative brochure about the group. The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. They are welcome to look at children's progress records at any time and chat informally. Some formal opportunities have been arranged for them to discuss their children's progress with staff but these have not been very successful. Parents are involved to some extent about what and how their children are learning, for example, through newsletter information about the phonics system that has been introduced, but this is patchy in general. As a result parents are not fully engaged in contributing towards the assessment of their children's achievement.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Appropriate staffing, documentation and use of the available space contributes to the satisfactory organisation of the group. There are enough qualified staff working with the children and the development plans show when other staff will start qualification training. Adequate systems are in place to ensure all staff employed by the group are suitable and a clear induction system is in place. Staff work well together as a team and there is always a good ratio of staff to children so that children are well-supervised at all times. However, too many responsibilities of the registered person are taken on by the manager rather than the committee which leaves her with less time to focus on ensuring that the children's everyday experiences are as good as possible. All the required documentation is in place and records are kept well. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The manager has made every effort to get help from local authority advisers and progress has been made since the last inspection. She is keen, along with the staff, to provide the best they can for the children. The manager is aware of the group's strengths and weaknesses and steps have been clearly identified in the development plans to minimise the weaknesses. However, the speed of progress

has been hampered because of the other demands on the manager's time related to securing the future sustainability of the group.

Improvements since the last inspection

The recommendations made at the last inspection have all been addressed. The framework that is now in place for the care of children is now more robust. Regular risk assessments are carried out and paperwork such as staff records and policies and procedures are kept up to date. There is an effective procedure related to the identification and assessment of children who may have learning difficulties.

The provision for early education is better because some work has been done to improve assessments and planning. However, further work needs to be done which is identified in recommendations from this inspection.

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 satisfactory.

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):

- consider how children are grouped to best promote enjoying and achieving for the youngest children
- ensure the committee fully take on the responsibilities of the registered person to allow the supervisor to focus on the day-to-day management of the session.

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 observation and planning systems so that individual children's progress can be clearly identified against the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and appropriate targets set

- develop strategies to ensure that parents become more fully involved with their children's learning and development.

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