

Weston Wombats

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218277
Inspection date	17 October 2007
Inspector	Ann Winifred Harrison
Setting Address	Weston Village Hall, The Green, Weston, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST18 0JH
Telephone number	07958 591 277 and 01785 607616
E-mail	
Registered person	WESTON WOMBATS 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Weston Wombats Pre-School Playgroup is run by a committee. It opened in 1992 and operates from the Village Hall in Weston, Stafford. The playgroup serves the local area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. The group opens three days a week, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during school term times. Sessions are from 9.30 to 12.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 28 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children attend a variety of sessions. The setting employs five staff. Four staff including the manager hold an appropriate early years qualification. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care through consistent daily routines. Staff promote good hand washing procedures at snack time as children are provided with liquid soap and paper towels to prevent cross contamination. Staff explain the reasons why children need to wash their hands to prevent them being poorly. They sing songs about brushing their teeth and their hair. This promotes children's health.

Children are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. They eat a range of nutritious snacks such as apples, pears, toast and cheese biscuits. Through active conversations with staff children develop a positive attitude to food. Posters and discussion help children to understand that fruit and vegetables are good for them. Children drink milk or water at snack time and can help themselves to water through the session, so are able to meet their own needs if they are thirsty.

Good hygiene procedures are followed in the setting to promote children's welfare, for example, tables are wiped before using them for snack times and staff wash their hands before serving food. Effective nappy changing routines are practised such as, wiping the changing mat after each use to help to reduce the risk of cross infection. Effective policies are in place for sick and infectious children which help prevent the spread of infection. Good accident recording procedures are in place and parents are informed of any injuries to ensure children's welfare is maintained.

Staff are very positive about ensuring that children get opportunities for physical play. Children experience a good range of daily play activities to enhance their physical development. They move confidently and are developing good coordination skills. They ride bikes, throw and catch balls and climb on climbing equipment. They join in well with action songs such as, 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes'. This promotes the development of children's large physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a warm and welcoming environment. Staff greet all parents and children at the door as they arrive with a friendly smile and welcome. They are cared for in an environment where risks are limited through good safety and security procedures. Annual risk assessments are completed and daily checks on the premises, equipment and resources are made to ensure children are kept safe. Staff monitor access to the setting at all times and any visitors are asked for identification. There is a system in place for registering staff and children's arrival and departure and to ensure only named individuals collect the children. Children are very well supervised and staff ensure that adult to child ratios are maintained at all times. There is an appropriately stocked first aid kit in case of injuries to children. All staff have first aid training which means that any injuries are dealt with appropriately.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, they know to take care on the climbing equipment and they must not walk around with food in their mouths. They are beginning to learn about road safety through discussion and role play. They know how to respond to emergency evacuation procedures, as these are practised regularly. When on outings children

know they must stay with an adult and on coaches they know they must use seat belts. Children have access to a good range of safe toys and equipment which helps to keep them safe.

Children are well-protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection issues. They know the likely signs of abuse and are aware of the need to share what they know or have seen with senior members of staff. A written child protection policy reinforces the correct procedures to follow. However, not all staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of allegations made against themselves and the implication this has in their practice in caring for children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly in the friendly atmosphere and have good relationships with their carers and enjoy their time in the setting. Staff develop children's confidence by warmly greeting them and having a familiar registration time at the start of the session. Children are given 'special jobs' such as 'leader for the day' or 'weather person'. Children eagerly wait to be chosen and relish the tasks given. The leader leads children to the bathroom and the weather person puts the correct pictures on the weather board. This helps children feel good about themselves and furthers their sense of belonging to the setting.

Staff plan a stimulating programme of activities to interest and engage children, as a result children show interest in the activities and good levels of concentration. For example, children listen intently to the story of the 'Hungry Caterpillar'. Children are relaxed and comfortable with staff and will happily engage them in play and conversation. Children enjoy circle time and singing, they are asked at end of story session, 'Who are you sitting next to?' then staff ask them to give that person a smile then they say, 'Take that smile home and keep it all day and bring it back tomorrow'. This promotes children's feeling of well-being.

The group are developing the use of 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan and provide activities for young children's development. They have an understanding of the range of experiences which enable young children to develop and learn. Staff complete observations and assessments of the children to find out what they know, and these are used to inform planning and to ensure children are making progress. All children benefit from a colourful, environment in which they are happy, content and well cared for. Staff provide good resources to enhance children's learning. Children enjoy exploring textures in sand, water and 'gloop'. Musical activities include singing and action rhymes which contribute to children's developing communication skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of how children learn and use the stepping stones to clearly identify children's achievements. Activity plans are linked to the stepping stones and ensure a range of activities and experiences are provided to extend children's learning. However, plans do not show how staff will be deployed or how all children will be challenged and this means that some activities do not offer challenge to more able children which potentially minimises the children's development and progress. Staff undertake detailed observations and assessments to find out what children know and these are beginning to be used to plan for children's next steps in learning. Staff engage in children's play and often extend their learning through good questioning. Behaviour is well managed and this results in

a calm and caring environment for children. Staff provide a good range of resources and to help children learn through their play. They change the role play area frequently to develop children's imagination, for example, making it a hospital, garden centre or a vets. However, these are not always organised effectively to challenge children and to make the most of the learning opportunities it provides.

Children are involved and enthusiastic and they enjoy taking part in the available activities. They demonstrate good concentration skills as they talk about the months of the year at circle time. They form good relationships with staff and their peers which helps promote their sense of well-being. Children's self help skills are good as they help themselves to drinks throughout the session. Children's verbal communication skills are generally good, they are confident to speak out at group time to tell others what they have been doing at home. Children enjoy listening to stories and singing their favourite songs and rhymes. There are opportunities for children to learn that print carries meaning, through seeing words in the environment to help them begin to recognise familiar words. They recognise their own names at registration time from their name cards. They have opportunities to practise their early writing skills as they use writing materials in the role-play area and make marks on the scribbler pads. Staff encourage writing skills through encouraging children to put down their names on a list for a turn with favourite toys such as the tractor. They are introduced to simple phonics and are beginning to recognise the sounds of the first letters of simple words.

Children are beginning to count and use numbers. They count reliably to 10 and above as they count the children present at registration time. Their learning is consolidated by being able to see numbers in their everyday play. They have opportunities to develop simple calculation skills through number rhymes such as 'Five Cheeky Monkeys' and through staff questioning at circle time such as, 'How many months are there?' and 'What comes after ten?'

Children are learning about the environment. They are provided with a variety of activities which enable them to explore their surroundings, for example, they go on walks to collect leaves and visit the near-by village green. They plant cress seeds and look at the life cycle of frogs. They go on outings to the Sea Life Centre to learn about life under the sea. They are learning about the community they live in, as they visit the church for a pretend baptism and are involved in the village fete. Children enjoy a good selection of art and craft activities such as exploring with shaving foam and printing with apples and pears. However, the challenge to more able children is sometimes limited in these activities. Children's imagination is well developed as they play in the market stall and with the dressing up clothes, although their learning is sometimes limited due to the organisation of resources and staff involvement. Children build complex models with a variety of construction toys. Children learn and join in with songs and nursery rhymes and they have regular opportunities to play with musical instruments and explore musical sounds and rhythm. Children's fine manipulative skills are developed with activities such as doing jigsaws, using scissors to cut with and creating models from play dough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enter the setting confidently. They sit quietly for registration time and talk to staff about their families and home life. This fosters a sense of belonging. Children enjoy positive relationships with the staff and with each other. They benefit from being cared for as individuals, with their different needs acknowledged and valued. They receive individual attention and are given lots of support. Children's confidence and self-esteem are developed by staff with good

use of praise and encouragement. They see their creative work displayed around the room which tells them their work is valued. They are involved in making some choices about their play, as they choose from activities and resources that staff have set out. However, there are limited opportunities for children to select resources and initiate their own activities which potentially restricts their play and learning.

Children behave well in response to clear boundaries set by staff. They are learning to share and take turns with equipment, for example they share the dressing up clothes and take turns on the bikes. Children are encouraged to be kind to each other and they have good manners. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are beginning to learn about the wider world through planned activities and celebrations such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. Staff ensure that the resources positively represent individuals from the wider community. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others.

All children benefit from the positive relationships staff have developed with parents. Children settle well because the staff work closely with parents to ensure their child's needs are met. Parents are welcome to stay in the setting whenever they wish. They receive written information on how the setting operates and can talk to staff at anytime. They are kept informed about how their child has been in the setting through daily feedback. They are informed of any accidents and the action taken by staff. Currently, there are no children with learning difficulties and or disabilities or children who speak English as an additional language attending the setting, but staff have past experience and ensure that they work with parents and other professionals to meet each child's needs.

The partnership with parents of children who receive early education funding is satisfactory. They receive some information on the educational programme provided for their children and they are kept informed of current topics and events through regular discussion and newsletters. Staff display the activities of the day on the notice board to ensure parents are informed about what their children have been doing whilst attending. Parents are invited to access their children's developmental records whenever they wish. This means parents are generally well informed of their child's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy in the environment and are cared for by staff who have relevant experience and qualifications. Staff demonstrate an understanding of the needs of all children to promote their well-being. There are suitable recruitment procedures which ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and there is a good level of qualified staff who work with the children. Staff ratios are always maintained to offer good support to children. There are clear systems in place for recording accidents, medication and attendance records. Detailed policies and procedures work in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Children are familiar with the routine and are comfortable and at ease in the setting. A key worker system is being developed to enhance continuity of care for children.

The leadership and management of the early education provision is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage which ensures the educational programme is generally delivered appropriately. Staff work well together as a team and there is a supportive management structure in place. Staff are supported with regular staff meetings and are encouraged to attend relevant training courses to update their knowledge and understanding of childcare issues. For example; child protection and 'Birth to three matters'.

The manager takes an active part in the setting and is committed to developing good practice. However, there is not an effective system in place to monitor and evaluate the educational provision to ensure children are making progress. This means that children's learning is restricted. Job descriptions and staff rotas give staff a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, however, plans for how staff are to be deployed during the session are limited. Activities and resources are generally well organised, although, there are some areas which are not fully utilised to extend children's play and learning. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection actions were raised to: ensure that child protection procedures include a statement of what action is to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and to introduce a procedure for lost or uncollected children. To address this the setting have reviewed their policies and procedures to include these regulatory procedures. Staff are now fully aware of what to do should a child be lost or uncollected. This helps to keep children safe. However, not all staff are fully conversant with the procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against themselves. This means children are not fully protected and this is carried forward to this inspection.

Recommendations were made to: develop an action plan which sets out how at least half of all childcare staff will hold a level two qualification in childcare; ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice and request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. The setting have increased the number of staff with the necessary qualifications and four staff are now qualified to level three. They continue to improve on this as one member of staff is working towards a relevant qualification. This means the group now have a high level of qualified staff to ensure the welfare and care of the children. Parents are now requested to give their written permission to seek emergency advice or treatment at the time of their registration. This ensures that children receive prompt attention in the event of an emergency. Staff now plan a range of activities that promote equality of opportunity. For example, they celebrate festival such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. They have purchased resources that include books, dressing up clothes, and small world figures that represent the diversity in society. This promotes children's understanding of others.

Early Education

The setting was asked to: evaluate and improve the use of daily routines to consolidate the children's mathematical development and improve planning to ensure that is broad and balanced over time, in the areas of knowledge and understanding of the world and communication and literacy.

To address this the setting have included regular opportunities for children to count and use number in their planning and routines. Children count at registration time and activities are planned to ensure children regularly use numbers. For example, children play games which include counting and simple addition during free play. Staff are generally on hand to offer support and to consolidate the children's learning in this area. Planning has been revised to ensure that the key areas are covered and this means that children receive a balance of activities across all six areas of learning.

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 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):

- develop further the staff's understanding of the child protection procedures regarding the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer
- improve opportunities for children to self select resources and initiate their own play.

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 further the system of planning and assessment to ensure that all children are challenged
- develop further the organisation of staff, activities and resources to extend children's learning
- develop a system of monitoring and evaluating the educational provision to ensure that all children make progress.

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