

# Ipstones Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	218443
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jennie Lenton
<b>Setting Address</b>	Millennium Play Pavilion, Church Lane, Ipstones, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST10 2LD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01538 266000
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Ipstones Pre-School Committee
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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](http://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?

Ipstones Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1975. It operates from two rooms within a purpose built building in the village of Ipstones, Staffordshire. The playgroup is registered to provide care for a maximum of 40 children under the age of eight. There are currently 39 children from 18 months to five years on roll. This includes 11 funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 08:45 until 15:45 Monday to Thursday and 08:45 until 11:45 on a Friday. There is one full-time member of staff, six part-time staff and a number of regular volunteers who work with the children. Over half of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3 with the manager qualified to degree level. Two members of staff are working towards a recognised qualification.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are warmly welcomed.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are effectively protected from cross-infection as the setting has robust policies and procedures in place. Staff wear disposable gloves for nappy changing and all surfaces are cleaned after use which reduces the risk of contamination. Sick children are excluded from the setting which prevents the spread of infection. Children's health is further promoted as they follow sensible personal hygiene routines. They are praised for 'stopping germs from spreading' as they remember to put their hands over their mouths as they cough. They are also beginning to understand the importance of washing their hands properly. Staff ensure that routines are consistently followed and assist children with hand washing after visiting the toilet and before eating.

Accident records are well maintained. All staff are qualified to administer first aid and understand the importance of accurately recording and sharing information with parents. Similarly, medication records are appropriately completed with parents signing to give consent for medication to be given then signing on collection to acknowledge the dosages administered. This ensures that children receive consistent care as they move between the setting and home.

Children benefit from a healthy and nutritional diet. Packed lunches are sent in from home and stored in the large refrigerator to ensure that food remains fresh. The setting provides snacks during the day and children tuck in enthusiastically to a selection of toast, crackers and fruit. They confidently pour their own drinks and skilfully butter their own crackers with minimum assistance from staff. Snack times are relaxed and an opportunity to socialise. This helps children develop a positive approach to healthy eating. There is constant access to fresh water during the day. This ensures that children remain hydrated as they are able to meet their individual needs.

Children enjoy good opportunities for active play. They regularly access the spacious outside area where they have plenty of space to run and jump. They enjoy pedalling tricycles and toy cars, zooming along the paved area before reversing with skill. Others play in the willow dens or enthusiastically tackle the climbing frames and whiz down the slide. Dance lessons are also offered. Children develop a sense of rhythm as they enjoy moving imaginatively around the room. They jump and clap in time to music as they follow the dance instructor. As a result, children's physical development is good and the variety of activities ensures that they have a positive attitude towards exercise.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and welcoming environment where risks to them are limited through effective security procedures. The exterior doors are all securely locked enabling staff to monitor access at all times. Inside the building, coded keypads restrict access into the main rooms where children are cared for. This protects children from inappropriate visitors and from leaving unsupervised.

Risk assessments are completed regularly and daily safety checks are made. The setting is well maintained and hazards are generally well minimised. For example, children do not enter the kitchen which ensures they are not exposed to hazards in this area. A wide range of safe, good

quality resources are available for play. Children are able to independently choose activities as many resources are set out at child level. All toys are appropriate for the age range of children who attend. Children also regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedure. This helps them to learn how to respond promptly to instructions which helps to ensure their safety in an emergency. A high level of supervision also further safeguards children most of the time. Staff work alongside them and are generally vigilant in spotting risks. Free play in the small room adjacent to the pre-school is not always effectively supervised, however. Children generally play safely in this room but due to the layout of the building, they can play near the storage shelving unobserved. This compromises their safety.

The good knowledge of child protection procedures demonstrated by staff helps to ensure children are protected from harm and neglect. All staff understand the correct procedures to follow for recording concerns. They have a clear understanding of signs and symptoms that may alert to child abuse and details of the Local Safeguarding Children Board have been included in the child protection policy. This means that any concerns can be promptly and efficiently reported.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are generally confident and happy at the setting. They build warm relationships with staff as their needs are promptly responded to. For example, staff quickly comfort children and give them their full attention as they seek reassurance or ask questions. This helps children to feel secure and valued. Their work is displayed around the room and they are encouraged to share their home life with the setting. For example, they talk about who is in their family and where they live. Parents are encouraged to help their children settle in and there are also plenty of opportunities for children to snuggle up with staff as they sit together at story time. As a result, children are relaxed and comfortable.

Children enjoy a good range of stimulating experiences that encourage their intellectual and creative development. Their preferences are respected as they move freely around the setting to access resources. For example, they choose to play with sand, design pictures with lentils and dried pasta or play together imaginatively with dressing-up clothes and dolls. Children are immersed in their play and enjoy painting or looking at books independently. They are also able to frequently access the outside play area where they enjoy the fresh air and sense of space. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is used to good effect to fully promote outcomes for the younger age range. Children's development across all areas is effectively promoted as staff observe their play and encourage all children to be involved in a wide range of activity. This enables children to gain and refine physical and social skills as they play.

Children learn right from wrong as positive actions are rewarded. They are encouraged to behave well through the successful use of praise and encouragement. For instance, as young children tidy away play things staff thank them for helping. Children show pride and are made to feel special as they are praised for their positive efforts. For example, children receive stickers as a reward for sitting quietly at story time. Consequently, children develop good levels of self-esteem.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage. They have undertaken training and have a sound knowledge of how children

progress through the stepping stones. They work well as a team, devising and delivering planned activities across all areas of learning. They are clear about the learning intention of each adult-focussed activity and use open questioning successfully to encourage children to explore their thinking. For example, asking children to predict what number comes next as they make a number line. As a result, children make rapid progress as they are effectively challenged. Covering all six areas of learning through effective planning, staff skilfully deliver activities that captivate and interest children. For example, children learn about size and volume as they enjoy making 'worms' with dough and comparing their lengths and widths. Such activities ensure that children are fully engaged and enjoy learning through play.

The system for assessment is effective and children show a good level of achievement. All staff make quality observations which are then recorded in the children's individual files. Staff ensure that all children are appropriately challenged by evaluating activities and planning children's next steps. This means that activities are successfully pitched at the right level. Consequently, children's learning is fully promoted and extended, based on individual ability. Staff use effective methods to maintain children's interest, sitting with them and extending their play. They are skilled at including all children, engaging them in groups or on an individual basis. For example, staff are equally competent in working on a one-to-one basis exploring numbers or singing number songs in a large group.

Children's attitude to learning is good. They concentrate well as they take part in registration time, responding to their name and answering questions with confidence. Their self-help skills are developing rapidly as they wash their hands before their lunch and pour their own drinks throughout the day. Children's language skills are good. They speak clearly and are confident approaching both adults and other children. They interact well, taking turns in conversation and sharing popular resources. Children are beginning to link sounds to letters and are supported appropriately as they learn to recognise their name in print. For instance, they start off with their names and a picture to aid recognition and are then provided with just their written name. This helps children develop early reading skills. Opportunities for children to develop early writing skills are also plentiful. They are provided with opportunities to paint, colour and draw in a variety of ways. For instance, using chalks on the paved area outside or designing pictures to their own satisfaction. This effectively encourages children to enjoy developing their handwriting.

Children understand and use number. They count to ten confidently and are able to match number to object as they use quality resources such as large dice and clear labelling. They use mathematical language such as 'bigger' or 'smaller' as they compare items and consider who has made the largest 'worm' out of dough. They also have opportunities to develop problem solving skills as they consider how many chairs they need at snack time or how many cookies to 'order' during a game. Children also have practical opportunities to find out about different aspects of their surroundings. They enjoy using everyday technology such as keyboards and play with laptops and telephones. They learn about their own culture as they engage in topics such as 'all about me' and visit their local church. Similarly, their understanding of the wider world is good as they learn about different traditions and festivals such as the Chinese New Year. This helps children learn about their own beliefs and those of other people. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is effectively extended.

Children develop their fine manipulative skills well. They show increasing control as they use pegs to secure items to a number line and use pens and pencils with precision. Their creativity is valued as they are free to use their imagination as they design pictures or play with resources. Children also express themselves freely as they take part in dance lessons and move to music.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

All children are treated with equal concern as the setting works well with parents to ensure children's needs are met. Individual records are sufficiently detailed to maintain the welfare of all children. For example, detailing the support individual children require with toileting needs or any special dietary requirements. Children are encouraged to recognise their own culture and to feel pride in their identity. They are encouraged to talk about their experiences and are included in the local community. For example, they attend a special church service every week and go on visits to the nearby fire station. This promotes a sense of belonging. There is also a good range of resources which reflect different cultures, disabilities and ethnicities. The setting provides some innovative opportunities for children to develop their understanding of diversity, such as trying to eat with chopsticks. This encourages children to develop a positive attitude towards the wider world.

Children have good opportunities to develop their social skills as they are encouraged to play together harmoniously. They generally behave well and show respect to each other and their surroundings. Staff are skilled and successful in managing behaviour in a way that promotes children's self-esteem. For instance, they quickly and calmly deal with disagreements over resources and remind children to be kind and share. As a result, children are generally respectful and show consideration for other's feelings. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children generally receive consistency of care as the setting has in place reasonable systems for communicating regularly with parents. Parents have the opportunity to communicate on a daily basis at arrival and collection times. This ensures that any changes or concerns relating to the children can be quickly responded to. For example, agreeing a password when someone other than the usual carer is going to come and collect a child. This safeguards children. A newsletter is also provided, detailing planned activities. This actively encourages parents to be involved in their children's care. Policies and procedures are available for parents to peruse. However, the setting does not provide parents with details about these policies or their availability. This means that parents are potentially unaware of their existence and therefore unclear about the care children receive.

The setting actively welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff seek to offer support to all children and are fully committed to working with parents and outside agencies to ensure that all children are encouraged to reach their full potential. The setting provides good access for all users, with all facilities on a single level. There is a designated member of staff who has undertaken specialised training to support children with additional needs and the setting is committed to promoting an inclusive approach.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. Parents receive some detailed information on the educational programme provided at the start of term and are made aware that they can access their children's records. They are not routinely asked to contribute to staff's understanding of their child's abilities, however. This means that staff have an incomplete knowledge of children's starting points. Parents are provided with details about children's activities and the topics that are covered. These are not regular or detailed enough to fully extend children's learning at home. This potentially hinders children's progression. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting however, and staff are approachable and keen to share details of children's work and progress.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Through good planning and effective staff deployment children receive high levels of care from qualified individuals. Their play and learning is significantly enhanced as experienced, enthusiastic staff work alongside them throughout the day. There are robust recruitment and vetting procedures to employ appropriate staff. Effective appraisal meetings ensure their ongoing suitability. Staff access additional training to enhance their practice. Children benefit as new ideas and techniques are shared and positively impact on the setting.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Children are progressing and achieving steadily because of the effective teaching methods. Staff are dedicated, keen and knowledgeable. They are clear about their roles as they are led by a strong management team. The setting evaluates its own performance and is largely successful in identifying its own strengths and weaknesses. There is a clear commitment to continued improvement which is shared by all staff. Aims and objectives focus on the development and achievement of all children.

Documentation is of a high standard and is regularly reviewed and updated. Most policies work well in practice to protect children and safeguard their well-being. Records are well maintained and stored appropriately with due regard for confidentiality. The good organisation of time and resources enhances children's play and learning. As a consequence, they are happy and content. Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the setting was required to: ensure that all medication records are signed by parents; request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment; ensure records of existing injuries are recorded confidentially; ensure the complaints, behaviour and child protection policies include all relevant detail and are shared with parents; develop staff awareness of the new guidance for child protection, and implement a system for the recording of incidents of physical intervention.

The setting has reviewed its policies and procedures and made a number of positive changes. All records relating to medication are now signed and written permission for emergency treatment is consistently collated on children's registration forms. This ensures that children receive prompt, appropriate care. Details of any existing injuries or the use of physical intervention are also accurately recorded. This helps to safeguard children as any issues are appropriately documented and shared. Staff show a good awareness of the new child protection procedures and all policies have been updated to include relevant detail. However, there remains a need to improve the way that policies are shared with parents. Nevertheless, the setting is now underpinned by sound policies which enhance practice. Children benefit as the standards of care are significantly raised by these comprehensive improvements.

To improve the standards of education the setting was required to: improve early literacy skills by providing children with mark-making activities; increase opportunities to hear rhyme and rhythm and the initial sounds in words; provide more opportunities for physical activities in all weathers, and use activities and routines to develop the understanding of maths.

Children now have a wide range of activities that encourage their early literacy skills. They enjoy using pencils, chalks and paints to mark-make with increasing meaning. They enjoy song time and dance on a regular basis where they clap, sing, jump and skip in time to the rhythm.

They also learn about initial sounds as they are encouraged to recognise their names in print. As a result, their development in communication, language and literacy is good. Mathematical development has also been addressed. Children are encouraged to use their mathematical skills to problem solve at routine times. They are asked to consider how many chairs are needed at snack time. They are also involved in counting as they line up together or sing number songs. The setting also provides a number of physical activities that can be enjoyed regardless of the weather. Children enjoy the weekly dance class and can play outside under the covered section of the play area. Staff also encourage children to come prepared for outside play and make use of the outside area during snowy or cold days. This promotes healthy development through regular exercise.

### **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):

- take positive steps to promote safety in the small room adjoining the main pre-school
- provide parents with information regarding the policies and procedures which are available at the setting.

#### **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):

- involve parents in the assessment of children's starting points and provide regular opportunities for learning to be extended at home.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)