

Cromford Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206753
Inspection date	11 January 2008
Inspector	Jennifer Getty

Setting Address	Cromford Methodist Church Hall, Water Lane, Cromford, Derbyshire, DE4 3QH
Telephone number	07798 846288
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Registered person	Cromford 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 satisfactory. 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?

Cromford Playgroup opened in 1990. It operates from rooms in the Cromford Methodist Church in the village of Cromford, Derbyshire. There is a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup serves the local area and surrounding villages.

The setting opens five days a week during school term only. Sessions are from 9:00 until 12:00 from Tuesday to Friday and from 12:00 until 3:00 on Monday.

There are currently 22 children from two years two months to four years on roll. This includes 13 children who receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup employs two full-time and three part-time staff who work with the children. Over half of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from Derbyshire local authority and are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The playgroup is managed by a parental committee, who delegate day to day responsibility to the staff.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted because they learn to follow good hygiene routines. They wash hands at appropriate times in the day, for example, before eating and after messy play. The risk of cross-contamination is minimised because staff wear gloves when changing nappies and children use liquid soap and paper towels when washing their hands. Staff are fully aware of notifying the regulatory body about infectious diseases and how manage them, however, the policy regarding sick children is not available to parents. This means they are not fully made aware that children do not attend if they are ill in order to prevent the spread of infection. Children are protected if they become ill or have an accident because most members of staff hold a current first aid qualification, the first aid box is checked regularly and items are replaced if necessary. Accidents are recorded and the entry in the book is signed by parents, although the detail recorded is not always consistent which potentially compromises children's health and welfare. The setting has an appropriate procedure for the administration of medication. The areas children use are regularly checked for cleanliness by staff.

Children are offered healthy snacks, such as cheese biscuits and fruit. They choose a drink of water or milk and are developing good independence skills as they encouraged to pour the drinks themselves. Children's dietary requirements are met because the setting obtains relevant information about allergies and health needs.

Younger children are able to move around the room freely and access all resources and toys. Children move confidently and have a good awareness of space as they carefully manoeuvre their bikes around a course set up with cones. There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop their physical skills as they ride on toys outside, jump and move to music indoors. Children have some opportunities to learn about health and bodily awareness although they are not provided on a regular basis. They enjoy their daily play in the yard outside and outings into the local community.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel secure and comfortable in the setting. Activities are set out ready for children creating a welcoming environment. Children put their coats on the named pegs and can see their work displayed which helps them develop a sense of belonging. Children are welcomed by a member of staff as they arrive and they begin to play with the toys and resources. The main hall is set out with different areas, for example, a reading corner, a writing corner, a maths corner, a craft area and a role play area. The reading corner provides a comfortable and quiet space for children to relax and rest. The range of toys and resources are suitable for the children's ages and stages of development. Staff ensure they are safe and appropriate in design and condition by checking and cleaning them regularly. There are suitable child-sized chairs and tables so that children can play comfortably and safely. The side doors are closed at all times and the gates outside are locked to restrict access, promoting children's safety. The door to the side room is kept closed so that children cannot access it unsupervised because it is unsafe for them to use.

The playgroup completes risk assessments for the premises and outings. A daily check of the premises is completed and recorded before children arrive. However, the door which links the

main hall to the church is closed but sometimes unlocked which potentially compromises children's safety as the church can be used by others and is an unsafe environment. Children are supervised in the main hall, although not all activities have been fully assessed in order to minimise hazards to children. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe as they regularly practise the emergency escape plan and they smile as they help tidy up ready for the next activity, for example, children happily sweep up sand and try to fit toys into the boxes. Parents bring children into the main hall as they arrive and come inside to collect them at the end of the session. This means that staff can ensure that children are collected safely. During outings children are kept safe by the high ratio of adults to children and staff assess risks and hazards beforehand. Children learn how to cross roads safely when the road safety person visits the playgroup.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Appropriate training is accessed by staff and a comprehensive policy is in place of which parents are made aware.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and enjoy their time in the setting. Younger children benefit from the staff's knowledge and awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and activities are planned that meet their needs and stages in development. Children are forming positive relationships with staff and their peers and young children receive good support from staff to help them settle easily. Children know the routines and happily find books to read after tidying away the toys. Staff are flexible in the routine to ensure that children have time to complete an activity, for example, children finish gluing cotton wool and paper to the large display picture whilst those who have finished their activity tidy up. Children are split into groups for some activities so that staff can deliver the activity directly for the children's ages and abilities ensuring that their needs are met, for example, story time and outdoor play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the learning outcomes of the planned activities. Planning works well to ensure that children's individual needs are being met. All areas of learning are covered in detail as part of themes and topics, short term plans highlight the stepping stones and learning outcomes for different ages and abilities. Staff meet each week to assess the planning and adapt activities according to the children's individual needs. Observations are carried out and recorded for each child and transferred to their assessment records. Children's achievements are recorded and supported by written evidence, examples of work and photographs. The records are assessed to identify children's next steps and these are used to inform planning on a weekly basis. Although staff have a good awareness of children's abilities the assessment records do not always contain all the information gathered by staff. Staff use appropriate methods to help children make good progress, for example, open-ended questioning to encourage children to develop their own ideas and purposeful interaction in children's play.

Children listen attentively and are confident to speak in a group. They excitedly call out 'octopus' and 'ostrich' as they recognise things beginning with the letter 'o' in the book at register time. Children are interested and motivated by the activities on offer concentrating on their chosen activity, for example, children think carefully about what they want to stick on the group collage picture and continue until they are happy with the outcome. They are developing good levels

of independence as they put on their own coats and dress themselves as snowmen as part of a song. Children enjoy listening to stories and are offered appropriate challenge because story times are split into groups. Three-year-olds reading a story say 'it's melted' as they think about what happens to the snowman. Children recreate real life experiences as they stop at the petrol pump whilst playing on their bikes and cars outside and set out roadwork signs. There are opportunities for children to link sounds to letters as the letter of the week is explored in detail and children are developing good early writing skills. Three-year-olds draw snowmen with chalk creating large circles and adding the eyes, nose and mouth. There is a mark-making area which is available daily where children receive support from a member of staff. They push their fingers through a small tray of sand to make pictures and write their names. Children enjoy reading for pleasure and concentrate as they look through books.

Children count confidently and enjoy opportunities in songs to count the number of snowmen left after one has melted. Older children are beginning to recognise numbers and carefully look at the weighing scales to see if they have enough butter for the biscuits, saying 'it's not enough, we need a bit more' as it has not reached the correct number. Children trying to find the matching sock in a game compare sizes and shape, saying 'it doesn't fit, it's too big'. However, they are not consistently challenged in relation to counting and calculation in everyday activities. The sand tray allows children to explore and investigate how things work. They drive the trucks through the sand and discover they are making it flat with the roller, children push harder on the roller to see how flat the sand becomes. Staff interact well and encourage children to make the connection between real life and their play, as they talk about the local road works. Children are able to develop an awareness of information technology through various resources, however, these are not always provided on a daily basis.

Exploration with sand, water, shiny paper, plastic strips, cotton wool, glitter and play dough help children represent their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. Children confidently use tools and equipment, developing good small muscle skills. Three-year-olds roll out play dough until it is large enough for their cutter and use paintbrushes to apply glue to the collage, adeptly putting enough glue on their chosen area. They enjoy music and sing along enthusiastically to 'If you're happy and you know it' doing the actions. They move around the room as they listen to music and freeze as soon as the music stops. They use their imagination in daily play as they pretend to be builders in the playhouse outside, banging on the roof and fixing the walls inside. Children communicate well with each other during play, saying 'we're going faster' as they pretend to be in a car and then decide who is going to carry the dolls.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing good levels of self-esteem as they take part in all activities and develop strong relationships with staff. They are all treated as individuals and valued as staff listen and respond with interest to all children. Relevant information about the children's needs is gathered as they start at the playgroup, for example, details about emergency contacts, health needs and abilities. This enables appropriate care to be given. There is a key worker system which works well to ensure that children settle easily and quickly. Staff are keen to promote children's enjoyment and adapt the routine to help children settle. There are a number of resources and activities which promote children's awareness of the wider world, as well as their local community. Children enjoy trips to the local shops and museums and taking part in activities relating to a variety of cultures and beliefs, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. Staff have a good awareness of meeting the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by working with parents and other agencies.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They behave well and understand the setting's consistent routine and boundaries. They are polite and play happily alongside each other. Staff use good methods to manage behaviour, for example, distraction and explanation. Children respond well to the staff's consistent use of praise and encouragement. They develop good relationships with staff and peers and are confident to talk in the group. They develop a good sense of independence and self-worth as they are encouraged to share, take turns, follow rules and listen to others. There is a policy in place for the management of behaviour, although, it does not contain information relating to bullying. This means that that children are not fully protected because parents and staff are not made aware of the setting's procedures in the event of bullying.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with a welcome pack which includes important information about how the playgroup is organised and the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. Children benefit from the communication between staff and parents as there are opportunities for them to exchange information on a daily basis. Parents are informed about their child's progress and achievements through discussion, an end of year report and regular coffee mornings when they are able to see their child's records. Children's learning is continued at home as parents take story sacks from the playgroup which encourage them to be involved in their child's learning. They are developed by staff in the playgroup and include a wide range of interesting and stimulating resources, such as dressing-up clothes, books and activities. Parents are also provided with a book and a letter each week to help children develop their early writing skills. There is a copy of policies and procedures available to parents and important information is displayed on the notice board, such as contact details, staff qualifications and safety information.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall children's needs are met. Children are protected because the playgroup has good recruitment procedures in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable adults who have been vetted. Staff induction systems mean that they are all aware of the setting's policies and procedures and appropriate training is organised when necessary. The staff appraisal system identifies staff's strengths, interests and training needs promoting all outcomes for children. The key workers meet with parents as the children start at playgroup to ensure that all the relevant information is obtained to promote consistency of care and help children settle easily. The system works well in practice and key workers maintain records and regular contact with parents to ensure relevant information is shared.

The organisation of time, resources and space is good. Activities are clearly laid out before children arrive and there is clear communication between staff to ensure the session provides good play opportunities for children. The space is organised so that children can move freely between activities encouraging them to develop their independence and self-selection skills. Documentation is generally maintained well and there is a system in place for recording children's times of arrival and departure, as well as the persons looking after them. Staff deployment is effective and staff move around activities, ensuring that children are purposefully engaged and supported.

Leadership and management is good. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and meet weekly to assess the planning and evaluate activities. The committee works well with staff to support children's learning and enjoyment and action plans are devised to improve

outcomes for children. The setting has formed good links with the local authority and they are committed to the improvement of care for the children attending.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the provider was asked to ensure activity planning reflects the differing ages and abilities of children; improve the detail of the child protection policy; improve the detail of the complaints procedure; improve staff induction procedures to ensure all new staff have an understanding of policies and procedures; improve the recording of fire drills; provide further details in the special educational needs policy. The provider was also asked to make the side room safe and ensure that daily records included the names of staff and volunteers looking after the children.

The setting has addressed all the recommendations to improve outcomes for children. Activities are planned in line with the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework, ensuring the needs of all the children attending are met. Children are split in some activities according to age and ability to ensure that activities are clearly focused on their varying needs, for example, outdoor play is split so that older children can have focused activities and younger children can confidently explore their environment and activities. Children's safety and welfare is promoted because the child protection policy includes details of procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff and the relevant contact numbers. There is an up-to-date complaints procedure which informs parents of how to make a complaint and the emergency evacuation practices are recorded in detail; including a time, date and evaluation. The policy for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that parents and staff are aware of how to care for them appropriately and it links to the 'early years action' and 'action plus' stages of the Code of Practice. Children's welfare is further promoted because the staff induction procedure ensures that all staff are aware of the policies and procedures and staff sign to indicate that they know these. Children's safety is promoted because the door to the side room remains closed preventing unsupervised access and the room is no longer used for children. The names of all staff and volunteers is recorded daily to further ensure children's safety.

At the last inspection, to improve the standard of nursery education, the provider was asked to ensure that children's observations and assessments link more clearly into the curriculum planning to improve differentiation; ensure all clusters in each area of learning are revisited frequently; develop further links with parents to improve their understanding of their child's progress; increase staff's understanding of planning and delivering music.

Children's observations and assessments are used to identify children's next steps in learning. These are discussed weekly to inform planning and ensure that there are appropriate activities to challenge children and help them progress further. The long term plans ensure that all clusters are covered and revisited as they are linked to various topics throughout the two year system. There are regular opportunities for staff to share information with parents, for example, as children are being dropped off or collected, in a report at the end of the year and through coffee mornings. Staff use children's assessment records to discuss their achievements and progress with parents. Parents are able to support children's learning at home through the use of story sacks provided by the playgroup and 'letter' books. Children are developing a greater awareness of music because staff have attended specific training relating to the delivery of music. There are frequent opportunities for children to sing and move to music and resources are available for children to explore different instruments.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure sufficient detail about accidents is consistently recorded, with reference to the location and treatment of injuries
- ensure a policy relating to children who are ill is available and shared with parents
- ensure that the risk assessment is reviewed if there are any changes, that all activities and areas are included and access to the church hall is restricted at all times
- develop further the behaviour policy to include bullying.

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):

- continue to develop activities that promote children's use of information technology and provide further opportunities for children to learn about health and bodily awareness
- provide further opportunities and challenges for children in calculating and counting in daily activities
- continue to develop children's assessment files to ensure all observations are consistently recorded.

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