

Rattlesden Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 251606
Inspection date 09 July 2007
Inspector Sarah Johnson

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Registered person Rattlesden 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?

Rattlesden Playgroup opened in 1969. The playgroup is a registered charity managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the playgroup. It operates from the village hall in the centre of Rattlesden and serves the local area. A maximum of 21 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup opens three days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00 on Monday, Tuesday and Friday. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 22 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The preschool currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The preschool employs two members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted through a range of good policies and procedures for health and hygiene. Children confidently take responsibility for their own personal hygiene as they independently wash their hands before snack time, after using the toilet and after playing outside. The provision of individual paper towels, liquid soap and wipes ensures children are effectively protected from the spread of infection. In addition, children are reminded that it is sensible to cover their mouths when coughing and they help themselves to tissues when they have runny noses. All members of staff have completed training in food hygiene, which enables them to follow good procedures when preparing and serving food. Children's rest and sleep patterns are accommodated, as soft cushions and blankets are provided in a quieter corner of the room.

Staff have completed relevant first aid training and maintain a fully stocked first aid kit which is easily accessible. All of the required documentation and consents are in place to ensure that children receive good care if they become ill or have an accident, including written permission to seek emergency medical advice and treatment. Written accounts of accidents and medication administered are signed by parents to ensure they are fully informed about their child's medical needs.

Children are well nourished. They enjoy preparing and eating fresh fruit and vegetables, which are provided by parents and shared amongst the group. Children independently pour themselves drinks of water or milk from jugs during snack time. However, fresh drinking water is not made readily accessible to children throughout the session, which potentially prevents them from remaining well hydrated. Children's individual dietary requirements are clearly recorded and well catered for.

Children have many opportunities to experience fresh air on a daily basis, as they access the well-equipped and fully enclosed garden. The provision of appropriate clothing enables children to play comfortably outdoors in most weathers. Children develop their physical skills through a range of activities such as running games, pedalling on ride-on toys, dribbling footballs between cones and crawling through tunnels and hoops. Younger children have ample space and support to encourage them to move around freely with increasing control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a exceptionally well-organised environment which accommodates children comfortably and fully supports their care, learning and play. The spacious hall is creatively organised into defined areas, including ample floor space for construction activities and a physical play area with floor mats. Staff are vigilant to ensure that children are extremely well supervised when accessing the separate toilet facilities and the kitchen is made inaccessible to children. Children play in a very welcoming environment as considerable thought is given to decorating the walls with bright and meaningful display boards and posters at the children's height. Children confidently help themselves to an extensive selection of toys and resources, which are regularly checked and monitored by vigilant staff who ensure they are safe and clean. The equipment on offer is stimulating and provides sufficient challenge and consequently, children are fully engrossed in their play.

Children's safety is given unquestionable priority, as staff are dedicated to conducting and recording thorough daily risk assessments. Children are actively involved in helping staff to identify possible hazards before playing in the garden, ensuring they develop a meaningful understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are encouraged to hang up dressing-up clothes and to keep small construction pieces on the mats to avoid tripping hazards. Robust systems ensure the safe arrival and collection of children. For example, parents provide written details of adults who are authorised to collect their children. Children enjoy safe outings as written permission is obtained from parents and adult to child ratios are increased appropriately. Children are protected further as comprehensive fire safety precautions are in place and staff sensitively practise regular fire drills with the children to ensure they know how to keep themselves safe.

Children are expertly protected from harm as all staff have completed training in child protection and they demonstrate extensive knowledge of issues relating to safeguarding children. A comprehensive written policy is fully implemented to ensure concerns are dealt with effectively and children's welfare is prioritised.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children settle immediately when they arrive as they are welcomed by enthusiastic and warm staff. They quickly find something to do from the wide range of stimulating activities which are set out attractively when they arrive. Staff and children have developed very trusting relationships which helps children to feel extremely secure and settled. Children delight in sharing their experiences and ideas and staff respond with genuine interest. Children are fully engaged in their chosen activities because staff skilfully observe them and adapt activities to enable children to gain the most out of them. For example, when a child shows an interest in dinosaurs, the staff provide boxes and other resources to enable him to create a dinosaur world.

Younger children receive excellent support as the staff use their extensive knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to inform their planning for children in this age group. As a result, activities are adapted to enable younger children to fully participate. For example, younger children are well supported when they choose to climb on the climbing frame and when learning to pour their own drinks. Younger children are presented with opportunities to make choices in their play such as deciding if they would like bubbles added to the water.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a very good working knowledge of the Foundation Stage and clearly understand how children learn and develop. Children benefit as staff are proactive in continuing their professional development and have completed many training courses relating to good practice in teaching, including Foundation Stage science and inclusive education. Effective planning ensures that children are engaged in a broad range of activities covering all six areas of learning. Children enjoy activities based around interesting weekly themes such as 'castles' and 'ourselves'. Their progress towards the early learning goals is facilitated, as learning intentions are identified in the planning and there are clear links to the stepping stones. Assessments files for individual children include meaningful observations and photographs of what they can do and these are used effectively to inform the next steps in their learning. As a result, children are supported to move on and progress.

Teaching methods are effective in helping children to consolidate and extend their learning. For example, staff use open-ended questioning and foster children's confidence to attempt new tasks. Staff constantly work directly with the children, often intervening sensitively with their play. For example, they join in with children's role play by dressing up and introducing scenarios. Staff support behaviour well to ensure an effective learning environment. For example, children learn to follow clear boundaries when using ride-on toys, as they receive penalty points on their licence if they bump into each other. Children's learning is maximised as staff put time, resources and the accommodation to effective use. The environment provides visual prompts to facilitate children's learning such as posters focusing on numbers, letters, colours and shapes.

Children demonstrate developing self care skills when putting on their own coats and shoes and accessing the toilet with decreasing direct support. They show a positive self-image as they enjoy sharing photographs from home and contributing items and memories to a special box. Children are developing their competencies in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They are learning to say the initial sounds in words and are beginning to understand that letters represent some of these sounds. Children recognise their own names in print when self-registering and attempt to write their name onto their creative work using a name card as a guide. They enjoy an increasing range of books and listen attentively to others during a show and tell session.

Children are learning about connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. They recognise numerals on a ruler and identify numbers of personal significance such as their age and house number. They use mathematical language such as bigger and smaller when placing of balls of play dough in order of size and compare the length of pieces of string when making leads for their soft toy dogs. Children enjoy being creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, dance and imaginative play. They use realistic resources to support their role play such as telephones, keyboards and water in a sink. When playing with small world characters in a castle, the children introduce storylines and narrative into their play. Children work creatively on a large scale; collecting leaves on a trip to the woods and positioning them on the ground to represent a person.

Children are making sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences in an interesting environment. They investigate aspects of the living world with all of their senses. For example, they learn about composting when adding the left over fruit from snack to the compost bin. While adding handfuls of grass cuttings and looking for slugs to speed up the composting process, they ask questions to find out more. Children occasionally use calculators in their play, however, they experience limited opportunities to use everyday technology and programmable toys to support their learning. They learn to care for living things and observe changes when planting a range of flowers and plants. Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities that help them to develop their skills when using small apparatus, tools and equipment. They safely handle knives to cut up soft fruits and use scissors to cut paper straws. They demonstrate increasing control as they explore malleable materials such as play dough, by patting, poking, squeezing, pinching, twisting and rolling.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive as their individuality is celebrated and they are fully included in all aspects of the setting. Staff and children genuinely enjoy the time they share together, as staff are interested in getting to know them and their parents extremely well. There is a comprehensive written policy in place for equal opportunities, which is implemented precisely to ensure children

are treated as individuals and with equal concern. Children are learning to value diversity and are developing an understanding of the wider community. For example, they meet people from their local neighbourhood and use resources such as books that reflect different cultures and posters written in different languages. Staff are motivated in providing excellent support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and they work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure children's individual needs are fully met. For example, a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) from the local authority visits the setting regularly to offer guidance. Staff have extensive understanding of the code of practice and they skilfully use this knowledge to monitor and assess children's needs.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children play harmoniously together. They share resources and take turns in games, indicating that they understand their role in relationships and are considerate of others. There is a comprehensive but clearly written policy for behaviour, which fully reflects the range of positive strategies used by staff to support children's behaviour. For example, staff skilfully use distraction techniques to diffuse unsettled behaviour and consistently praise children when they are kind and helpful to others. Children experience meaningful opportunities to learn about cultures other than their own. They celebrate festivals such as Chinese new year, when they make dragons, learn dragon dances and sample traditional Chinese noodles and rice.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Effective relationships are formed with parents to support children's development from the beginning, as staff gather information about children's likes and dislikes, what they can do, their individual needs and routines. Parents are well informed regarding policies, procedures and the Foundation Stage. This is achieved successfully through informal daily discussion with parents, newsletters and information about topic areas displayed on an informative notice board. Staff are very approachable and welcome parent's contributions to their children's assessment records through regular open sessions. Parents are kept up-to-date with their children's progress. For example, staff encourage children to share their learning experiences with their parents at the end of the session and photographs of children taken during activities are made available. Children feel valued as the staff respect diversity in families and encourage children to share stories of their everyday lives and to bring objects in from home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by well qualified and suitable staff who are clearly dedicated to meeting children's individual needs. Children are safeguarded by sound recruitment and vetting procedures, ensuring they are never left alone with adults who have not been suitably vetted. The sessions are well-organised and staff deployment and ratios positively support children's enjoyment and ability to take an active part in all aspects of the setting. The setting is well supported by parents who readily sign up to the parent helper rota and volunteers are managed effectively.

Children's well-being is further promoted by well-organised and purposeful documentation and records. However, the hours of attendance are not clearly defined in the daily registers, which potentially compromises children's welfare and safety. The operational plan is extensive, clearly detailing the running of the provision and is readily available to parents. Staff have a good understanding of the National Standards and are fully aware of their responsibility to inform Ofsted of any significant changes and events.

The leadership and management is good. Staff work together efficiently to form a cohesive team, which positively supports children's learning. The overall responsibility for nursery education has been appropriately delegated to the manager as she has a very good practical knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The manager adopts a professional yet approachable manner and the setting has a clear agreed vision for educating and nurturing children. Staff monitor and evaluate the quality of the education offered through discussions at staff meetings, thorough completion of the self-evaluation form and reviewing responses from parental questionnaires. Staff appraisals address individual strengths and ensure staff training needs are identified. All staff are involved in planning for children's learning which ensures they experience consistency in their education. Children benefit as staff work closely with advisors from the local authority and evidently act upon any advice given.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the playgroup was asked to further foster children's independence and sense of community by providing opportunities for them to take more responsibility for preparing and tidying away activities. They were also asked to increase the range of activities which children can access independently.

Children now take responsibility for tasks within the daily routine. For example, they wipe the tables before snack, prepare their own food, pour drinks and use a dust pan and brush to sweep sand from floor. They self-select from an extensive selection of toys and play equipment, which are now stored in low-level storage boxes and labelled. As a result, children develop their independence and experience a sense of responsibility.

At the last nursery education inspection the playgroup agreed to: improve the programme for mathematical development to include opportunities for children to problem solve and explore the concept of more and less within the daily routine; provide parents with meaningful information about the Foundation stage and the areas of learning and give them opportunities to be partners in their child's learning by sharing information about the learning intentions of planned activities and further develop children's imaginations by providing a stimulating and accessible area for them to engage in role play.

Children explore the concepts of more and less when they compare the sizes of different bears and they decide who has cut up the most pieces of fruit. Parents are now well informed about the Foundation Stage and how their children are working towards the early learning goals. Information is disseminated through newsletters and a list of weekly topics is displayed on the notice board, including suggestions of items to bring in from home to support children's learning. Staff have introduced a book lending scheme to help parents to facilitate children's learning at home. Excellent imaginative areas are now available to foster children's imaginative skills, including an office area and well-resourced home corner with realistic props.

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.

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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):

- ensure fresh drinking water is readily available at all times
- ensure hours of attendance are recorded in the daily attendance registers.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to identify the uses of everyday technology and use information and communication technology and programmable toys to support their learning.

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