

Charlton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220293
Inspection date	08 November 2007
Inspector	Rhonda Foster
Setting Address	Charlton Memorial Hall, Main Street, Charlton, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 3DL
Telephone number	01295 812909
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Registered person	Charlton Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

Charlton Playgroup was registered in October 1992 but first opened about forty years ago. It operates from rooms within the Memorial Hall in the centre of the village of Charlton. The playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently 32 children from two to four years on roll. This includes 16 funded three-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are no children currently attending who have special needs or who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 15:00 Monday to Wednesday and 09:00 until 12:30 Thursday and Friday.

Two full-time and four part-time staff work with the children. Five of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Local Authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good health and hygiene practices through the established routines of the setting. For example, they consistently wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet, they also use tissues to wipe their nose. All staff have food hygiene training and consistently follow effective procedures when preparing and serving snacks. When changing children's nappies staff wear disposable gloves and a plastic apron. Consequently, the risk of cross-contamination is minimised and children stay healthy.

Children receive good quality care if they become ill or have an accident because staff are aware of their individual health care needs. All the required documentation and consents are in place to support this such as permission to seek emergency medical treatment and/or advice. All staff have attended relevant first aid training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow to maintain children's health. The accident records are well organised and reviewed regularly to identify any potential or actual hazards.

Children's dietary needs are well met through the provision of a snack bar area that takes account of their individual dietary needs and preferences. Parents provide a packed lunch for their child if they attend all day and they are encouraged to ensure contents are healthy. Children are able to choose when to have their snack and sit in groups to enjoy foods such as cereal, fresh fruit and home-made fruit loaf. Children are provided with a small knife so that they can spread their own butter which encourages independence. They have a choice of milk or water to drink at snack time. Throughout the day a jug of water and cups are provided for children to pour their own drink if thirsty. Consequently, children are well nourished and do not become dehydrated.

Children enjoy a good range of physical play activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They have access to a stimulating outdoor area where they use a wide range of toys and equipment such as slides, bouncers, bikes and a seesaw that promote large muscle movement, balance and co-ordination. Children demonstrate increasing muscle control and hand-eye co-ordination while engaged in activities such as drawing at the graphics table and when using a paintbrush. Children are able to rest and sleep according to their needs. A quiet area is provided for children who fall asleep or want to do a quiet activity such as looking at books.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very safe and secure environment where staff take positive steps to minimise risks. For example, children have restricted access to the kitchen and cleaning materials are stored out of reach. The setting has followed fire officer recommendations and effective fire safety precautions are in place. Staff regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedure with the children to ensure they know what to do in the event of a fire. Written and visual risk assessments are regularly carried out on all areas and before taking the children on outings.

Staff create a very welcoming and stimulating environment. The main indoor play area is a large hall which is attractively decorated with displays of children's artwork and photographs of special occasions. The layout of this area has been carefully considered so that it covers all areas of development and provides children with plenty of space to move around freely. The

same amount of thought has gone into the layout of the outdoor area which adjoins the premises. Children are able to move easily between the two areas under the close supervision of the staff. Well-organised, child-friendly storage facilities enable all the children to self-select from the broad range of safe and suitable resources. Toys and equipment are well maintained, attractively presented and meet safety standards. Children develop a good understanding of safety rules. For example, they know not to run about inside and when walking to the local shop the staff make them aware of their surroundings as they learn about road safety.

Children's welfare is safeguarded. There is a designated member of staff who has attended child protection training. Staff are fully aware of their role and responsibilities in protecting children. The setting's policy and procedure reflects the Local Safeguarding Board's guidance and is shared with parents. Consequently, children stay safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled in the welcoming environment. They form good friendships with each other and excitedly join in with activities. Children are confident and can play well on their own or with others. Staff are very supportive and caring towards all the children. They encourage children to express themselves and take time to listen to them. For example, when children excitedly talk about the firework display they have recently attended. Consequently, children develop a sense of self-worth as they know their contributions are valued. Activities and routines are organised to promote free play where children can initiate their own play. For example, when children take on roles in the home corner which has been turned into a hair salon. They are able to follow their own interests as they freely choose to spend their time engaged in activities that motivate them.

The setting is actively using the 'Birth to three matters' in their good practice with the younger children. They use an effective system to record children's progression through the framework. The planning demonstrates how activities are adapted to ensure younger children are able to participate and make good progress. For example, staff place great emphasis on children developing their independence when putting on their own coats, washing their hands and pouring their own drinks. Children understand the routines of the group and come together happily at group activities such as story time and lunch time.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play which ensures children are engaged in a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities. Staff use their good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn to provide a stimulating environment. An effective range of teaching methods is used to support and challenge children. For example, when children are encouraged to describe the snack time fruit and asked to count how many pieces of fruit are needed. Staff consistently join in with children's play to extend their learning without taking control of the activity.

Planning is based on themes such as 'All about me', balanced across all six areas of learning and is flexible enough to allow for spontaneous events. It is clearly linked to the appropriate stepping stones and shows differentiation for individual children. There is effective use of meaningful observations that record children's progress and indicate their next steps in learning. Planning and activities are evaluated regularly by staff to identify children's starting points,

achievements, concerns and to aid future planning. Staff effectively manage children's behaviour and use positive management techniques to encourage children to manage their own behaviour.

Children clearly enjoy their time at the setting and develop a positive attitude to learning as they confidently explore the environment. They negotiate and interact well with their peers to share toys and experiences. For example, when building a tower of wooden bricks together and helping each other stack the bricks so that they do not fall off. Children play together well when in the well-resourced role play area and take on various roles.

Children demonstrate good pencil control when accessing the graphics area. For example, when sounding out and writing their own name. Most children confidently recognise their own name on their coat peg and tray, some can identify others. With staff encouragement they use mathematical language such as tallest and smallest when measuring themselves on a height chart. During play and everyday routines children often practise their counting skills and identify numbers. For example, when using the computer they count images on the screen and recognise most numbers under nine. Children have daily access to electronic equipment such as a digital camera and games that support their eye-hand co-ordination, small muscle skills and levels of concentration. However, they have restricted access to the computer and because of this they tend to excitedly crowd the area and then have to wait some time for a go.

Children enjoy taking part in hands on activities that stimulate their senses. They eagerly dig in a soil pit outside in search of worms and pour water through plastic tubes, catching it in a bucket before it goes down the drain. Children have plenty of opportunities to explore their creativity while experimenting with a good range of media and materials when making firework pictures and running their fingers through a cornflour mixture. Overall, children make good progress in their learning and achieve well given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the setting. Staff value their individual personalities and ensure that all children are able to participate. Children gain a sense of pride and self-worth as their artwork and photographs of special occasions are attractively displayed. They all have their own coat peg and tray where their personal possessions are kept. Consequently, children develop a strong sense of belonging. The setting has effective arrangements in place to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A designated member of staff works with parents and other professionals to ensure that children's specific needs are met.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are learning effective strategies to manage their own behaviour. They understand the rules of the group and explain them to others, children remind each other to take turns when washing their hands at the sink. Staff are good role models and use positive behaviour management strategies. For example, when children become excited and start running indoors the staff successfully distract them by suggesting they dance to some music. As a result, children's behaviour is good and they are learning right from wrong.

Children have meaningful opportunities to learn about their local community and the wider world. For example, children go on regular walks to the village shop and primary school. They also take part in festivals such as Diwali, when they make Diwali hands and explore artefacts from other cultures. Children's birthdays are celebrated when they get to take home the 'birthday bear' and parents record in the birthday book 'what the bear did'.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. All the required documentation and consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes. Parents are able to view the setting's policies and procedures that detail the running of the setting. Children benefit from the good relationships fostered with parents. Effective two-way communication between parents and staff ensures that children's changing needs are met and they benefit from continuity of care. Regular newsletters, parent evenings and a parent notice board in the main entrance provides further information to parents regarding the Foundation Stage and what their children are learning at the setting. However, the complaints procedure does not fully reflect the National Standards and is not readily available to all parents. Consequently, parents are unsure of how to make a complaint regarding the quality of care children receive.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are relaxed and happy in the setting. They are effectively safeguarded as the recruitment and thorough vetting procedures ensure that children are well protected and cared for by staff who have a very good knowledge and understanding of child development. The well-organised environment and effective staff deployment enhances children's enjoyment and ability to take an active part in the setting. The day is well organised with clear routines which help the children to settle and become confident. Staff work together as an effective team to support children's care, learning and play.

The operational policies and procedures are effective and reflected in the good practice. They promote children's good health, personal safety, enjoyment and achievement to make a positive contribution. The plan is organised and clearly details the running of the provision. It is readily available to parents each day and all required documentation is in place to promote the welfare of children attending.

The leadership and management is good. The strong leadership provided by senior staff has built a dedicated team who are committed to training and improving the quality of care and provision of nursery education. Through daily discussions and meetings staff evaluate the provision and identify areas for improvement. Staff appraisals are carried out annually to identify strengths and weaknesses. The setting works closely with other professionals and evidently acts upon any advice given.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection the setting was asked to make sure that staff develop their knowledge of the Code of Practice (2001) for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Since then staff have attended in-house training delivered by the designated person who is experienced in the role as Special Educational Needs Coordinator. A clearly written policy is in place which is inline with current legislation and reflects the Code of Practice. Staff work in partnership with parents and agree strategies to effectively support children.

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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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):

- review the complaints procedure so that it reflects requirements set out in the National Standards.

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):

- extend children's access to Information and Communication Technology, with particular reference to the computer.

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