

Ipswich Opportunity Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251532
Inspection date	17 September 2007
Inspector	Sarah Johnson
Setting Address	558 Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 4PH
Telephone number	01473 270009
E-mail	
Registered person	Ipswich Opportunity Group
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ipswich Opportunity Group is managed by a voluntary management committee run. It opened in 1993 and operates from the large hall in the Salvation Army Citadel in Ipswich. The group operates three sessions a week during term times. It opens on Monday from 10:00 to 11:30 for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities under two and a half years. Two further sessions are run on Monday from 13:00 to 15:00 and Friday from 10:00 to 12:00 for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged up to five years and their siblings. The group also opens occasionally during school holidays. Parents and carers attend sessions with their children. There is no outside play area.

A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 37 children on roll, all of whom attend on a part-time basis.

The group employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification. The setting receive regular support from an educational advisory teacher and health professionals.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff follow good health and hygiene procedures which promote children's health throughout the daily routine. The children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating snack and after using the toilet and they are well-protected from the risk of cross-infection as they are provided with liquid soap and individual paper towels. Children are encouraged to learn to use the toilet independently through the provision of steps by the sinks and toilets and sensitive supervision by staff and parents who ensure children wash their hands effectively. Children's health is promoted further through effective food handling procedures as two members of staff have completed training in food hygiene. For example, snacks are prepared in a very clean kitchen area, staff ensure they wash their hands before preparing food and surfaces are consistently cleaned with antibacterial spray.

Staff are well-equipped to care for children in the event of an accident as three members of staff are trained to administer first aid to infants and young children and a well stocked first aid kit is clearly labelled and easily accessible in the main playroom. There are good procedures in place for recording accidents in the accident book and these are consistently signed by parents. However, children's well-being is not fully promoted as written parental permission is not requested to ensure children can receive emergency medical advice or treatment, should it be necessary.

Staff are efficient in ensuring children have a healthy diet as they plan balanced and nutritious snacks, which are enjoyed during social snack times when the children, staff and parents sit together. Children enjoy snacks of raisins, pureed fruit, pieces of banana and yoghurt. Staff give full regard to children's individual dietary needs as information about any allergies is requested when children first join the setting and then highlighted on the daily registers to ensure that all staff are made fully aware.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical play experiences in the spacious playroom. Children are encouraged to exercise as they enjoy bouncing on a small trampoline, crawling through tunnels, climbing on soft play mats and negotiating space whilst using ride-on toys. Children enjoy occasional planned trips, offering opportunities for children to play outdoors in the fresh air such as visiting the local children's centre to play on large apparatus and running around in the play area at a railway village.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and benefit from a stimulating and child-orientated environment, with clearly defined areas for physical play, table top activities and relaxing comfortably with soft toys and books. Children are confident, happy and secure in the space, as they move around freely in the bright and airy playroom. Staff are vigilant to ensure that children are well supervised when accessing the separate toilet facilities and the kitchen is made inaccessible to children. Children play in a very welcoming environment as staff take time to decorate the walls with meaningful displays such as booklets of transport pictures made by the children. Children have very good access to a wide variety of stimulating toys, resources, equipment which are set out attractively for them when they arrive. Children are also supported to self-select resources from low-level storage drawers which are labelled with picture prompts.

There are effective systems in place for ensuring that children are safe on the premises. For example, children are prevented from leaving the premises unsupervised as they are very well supervised and a safety gate is installed at the entrance door. Children are protected further as good fire safety precautions are in place including a clear emergency escape plan which is practised sensitively on a regular basis with the children and their parents. Thorough visual risk assessments are carried out on a daily basis to further promote children's safety. For example, staff check that the blind cords are out of children's reach and that chairs are not stacked too high.

Children are effectively protected from harm as two members of staff have completed training in child protection and they demonstrate good knowledge of issues relating to safeguarding children. A clear 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 arrive happy and settle extremely well as they are sensitively supported by staff in the inviting play environment. For example, children respond with smiles and giggles as they are greeted individually by warm and enthusiastic staff, who are genuinely pleased to see them. Staff spend a majority of their time interacting directly with children, effectively creating a calm and friendly atmosphere where children are actively encouraged to make their own choices. For example, staff encourage children to choose their preferred drink at snack time and they feel highly valued when the staff clap to praise their choices.

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 dressing up as a police officer, staff provide a mirror so they can look at themselves. Children's imaginative play is fostered extremely well as staff encourage them to introduce themes into their role play. For instance, when children use ride-on toys the staff creatively offer children tickets and encourage them to buy petrol from an imaginary petrol station. This activity is extended extremely well as the children are asked to say how many litres of petrol they need, encouraging them to develop their mathematical thinking. Children delight in the whole group singing time at the end of each session, where they use picture cards to select their favourite songs and sing along enthusiastically.

Younger children receive excellent care as the staff informally reflect the 'Birth to three matters' framework in their practice. Younger children are given ample time to explore their ideas. For example, they spend considerable time picking up strands of sticky blue spaghetti, passing it from one bowl to another. The staff encourage children to develop their natural curiosity by providing low-level mirrors throughout the environment, which children use to explore their own facial expressions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff value children's individual personalities and ensure all children are able to play with toys and equipment which meet their individual needs, so they can become confident and independent. Staff make the most of the fact that parents are present during sessions as they initiate discussions to find out about children's changing needs and their family routines. There

is a positive written policy for equal opportunities which is implemented well in practice, ensuring that all children are treated with equal concern and feel good about themselves. For example, children feel valued as the staff clap to celebrate their achievements when drawing with chalks and they smile proudly as they pose for photographs.

Staff are motivated in providing positive 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, advisors from the local authority visit the setting regularly to offer guidance which the staff evidently acts upon. Staff have good understanding of the code of practice and they skilfully use this knowledge to monitor and assess children's needs. Children are encouraged to communicate their ideas and needs as staff use sign language and picture cards to help children to understand the routine and make choices.

The calm and relaxed atmosphere offered at the setting encourages children to play well together and to learn clear boundaries. Staff are careful to consider children's individual levels of understanding and maturity when deciding on the most appropriate methods for supporting their behaviour. For example, they aim to understand what may be causing any behaviour and how this may be as a result of children's specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Parents have friendly relationships with the staff and approach them with ease and confidence. Consequently, children's development is well-supported 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 and procedures. This is achieved through informal daily discussion with parents and information displayed on a notice board. In addition, parents readily access a wealth of information leaflets about local support groups which are laid out on a table. Albums of photographs of the children taken during activities are also available and shared proudly amongst the children, parents and staff as they recall their experiences. Staff are aware of their duty to log complaints, should they ever receive any. However, the written complaints policy does not fully reflect current requirements and does not include the correct contact address for Ofsted as the regulator. Consequently, parents are not fully informed of how to register a complaint.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are safeguarded as thorough recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well-protected and cared for by staff who are well-qualified and have good knowledge and understanding of child development. The well-organised environment and high adult to child ratios enhance children's enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Sessions are well-organised with clear routines, helping children to settle and become confident. Staff work together as an effective team and value the partnership they have fostered with parents to support children's care, learning and play.

Children's well-being is further promoted by well-organised and purposeful documentation and records. However, the actual hours of attendance for children, staff, parents and visitors are not recorded in the daily registers, potentially compromising children's welfare and safety. The operational plan is well-organised to show how the setting operates on a daily basis and this is shared with parents upon request. Documentation is stored securely on site, ensuring children's personal information remains confidential. Children are cared for in line with their parents' wishes, with appropriate consents and detailed information obtained from them prior to the children starting at the setting. Staff continue to work closely with parents to monitor

changes to information so that children's ever changing needs can be accommodated at all times. Staff have a sound understanding of the National Standards and are aware of their responsibility to inform Ofsted of any significant changes and events.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure that the complaints procedure gives contact details of Ofsted as the regulator. Although the complaints procedure has been updated to include the contact address for Ofsted, the address has since changed and this has not been updated accordingly. As a result, parent's potentially do not have all the information they need in order to raise a complaint.

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

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.

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):

- request written parental permission, at the time of placement, to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment
- update the written complaints procedure to reflect current requirements, including the current contact address for Ofsted as the regulator
- ensure the daily registers include actual hours of attendance for children, parents, staff and visitors.

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