

Pulford Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306469
Inspection date	27 June 2007
Inspector	Gillian Sutherland

Setting Address	Pulford Road, Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside, CH63 2HN
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Registered person	Alison Claire Robinson
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Sessional care
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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?

Pulford Playgroup opened in 1994 and operates from a self-contained mobile unit. It is situated in the residential area of Bebington in Wirral. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday during school terms from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.30 to 15.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 63 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 57 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The playgroup employs eight members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications whilst a further four members of staff are working towards one.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health and physical development is very well promoted both indoors and outdoors through regular access to fresh air and physical play. The outdoor play area is used weather permitting by children attending either morning or afternoon sessions and provides opportunities for energetic play. Children gain confidence and learn to coordinate their movements as they jump in and out of the hoops, ride bikes or cars and play with balls. Indoors children access music and movement sessions, play with bean bags and at each session have access to a large climbing frame and slide. They have plenty of opportunity to develop their fine motor control, for example, as they skilfully manoeuvre the mouse and keyboard at the computer and use small cutting tools and scissors in their creative activities.

Children are cared for in a clean environment, where they develop a good understanding of personal hygiene as they are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times throughout the day. Children are able to access the toilets independently as these are sited just off the playroom and here children access soap and use paper towels to dry their hands with.

To ensure children are protected and well cared for, at least one staff member holding a current first aid certificate is on duty at all times and accurate accident and medication records are maintained.

Staff create many opportunities for children to talk about being healthy during play sessions and planned topics. Children enjoy social snack times where they can sit together and chat, thus developing their confidence and self-esteem. They are provided with healthy snacks including fresh fruit and a drink of milk or water which are poured out for them by a member of staff. However, children cannot freely access fresh drinking water during the session.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are relaxed and happy as they enter play group. They are greeted warmly by the staff and quickly seek out their friends and settle into the daily activity programme. All areas accessed by children are bright and well decorated with their art work and a range of different posters and pictures relating to current themes and topics. For example, when many of the children present were due to leave playgroup and move on to the local infant school, the staff had a display of photographs of teaching staff and items relating to the adjacent infant school including the school uniform. The space within the play group building is designed in such a way that children can move around freely and self-select the toys and resources they want to play with and the activities they want to participate in. The layout also enables children to be independent, as they can go to the toilet and access hand washing facilities at any time during the session.

Children's safety is well promoted through daily risk assessments, where staff check all areas prior to each session operating. Good procedures are in place regarding the collection of children and appropriate arrangements must be made with the staff if anyone other than their parent comes to collect them.

Children also learn to keep themselves safe as they play freely in the setting and access the climbing frame. An example was observed when one or two children brought the small cars and

trains over to the rubber safety mat and began to play with those under the slide. A member of staff gently reminded them to take them back to the train or road layout and explained that other children coming down the slide could fall on them and hurt themselves.

Effective fire safety procedures are in place and staff ensure that all children learn how to evacuate the building quickly and safely. Fire drill practises take place at regular intervals and a record is maintained of when these are carried out.

Children's welfare is not safeguarded appropriately because the child protection policy does not comply with current legislation in respect of terminology and does not include the telephone numbers of the local social services or police.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy and eager to participate, enjoying their time at playgroup. Children achieve well because staff are skilled and use their understanding of early years guidance, such as the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and more recently the Birth to three matters framework to provide good quality care and education. Children show independence as they self select and make choices about the toys and resources they want to play with or participate in. Staff encourage children to play together and share. An example of this was observed as children participated in a game of lotto using animal pictures plus a tape with animal sounds on. Children playing this game knew they had to listen for the sound of the animal and then cover that animal up with a corresponding picture. Children enjoy close contact with familiar adults and although a formal key worker system does not operate, the staff are familiar with all the children and their personal circumstances and can meet their individual needs. This results in the children being happy and secure in their relationships with staff. Children's self esteem is developed as staff give children lots of praise and encouragement and display their art work around the nursery. Staff working in each of the different age groups talk to the children throughout the session, helping them to become skilful communicators.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff share the responsibility for the implementation of the educational programme and have developed some understanding of the Foundation Stage, which they then use during their planning to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are covered. Children are therefore making steady progress towards the early learning goals in all areas. Effective planning and record keeping assists the staff to provide new and stimulating play activities.

The planning of the activity programme is primarily undertaken by the owner plus the manager of the playgroup and she explained that activities are planned on a long and short term basis. Staff observe children at play and use notes to record the achievements children reach during their play. Each child has their own development file, into which these development notes are transferred to. Parents have access to these files at any time on request.

Children participate in a wide range of purposeful activities and access a varied range of resources which support their progress across all areas of learning. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories, participating themselves when appropriate during the story session. The play group do have a book lending scheme where each week children 'borrow' a book to take home with them and look at with their family before returning it to playgroup the following

week. Children are confident speakers and talk to each other, and to the staff during their play activities. They are beginning to recognise the sounds and shapes of letters and can identify these. An example seen was during a play activity in which each child was given a small tray with some fine sand in. Children using their fingers began to make the different shapes of the letters their names began with.

Children enjoy using role play equipment. In the home corner, on the two occasions visited, children played well together using play foods and a range of home equipment, including a washing machine, vacuum cleaner and a cooker. They used the 'mobile phone' and the older style telephone to ring each other and have a conversation. One child was asked to go to the shops and given the shopping trolley complete with hand held scanner whilst another child stayed back at home to wash and feed the baby dolls. They also have toy cameras in the home corner which they use to take photographs of each other. On other occasions they have used the small cars and pretended to be the pizza delivery person bringing home the pizzas for tea.

All children are provided with many opportunities to promote their creativity, and their personal self-esteem is raised, as they proudly display and talk about their art and craft work. Children have daily opportunities to participate in a creative activity which includes painting, sticking and gluing pictures and also another important activity is the use of water play and dough. The children used some wooden rolling pins each with a different texture on the side. In this activity children were able to create many different patterns in the dough. They enjoyed playing in the water trough which they could freely access during the session and were aware of the need to put their protective aprons on before they began. Here children were able to discover the joy of filling up containers and jugs and measuring and pouring them through different containers. For example, children loved to feel the water trickle through their fingers as they poured it through a sieve or strainer.

Children count confidently and are able to recognise numerals displayed around the setting. They have opportunities to identify different mathematical shapes and also participate in simple calculation activities. For example, children participated in a fishing game using rods and magnets and coloured fish with different numbers on each one. Each child had to hook a fish and look at the number on the fish and then find the corresponding number card.

Children are also learning about the environment as they begin to grow their own vegetables and some of the children were growing beans in the playroom and could talk about the flowers that the caretaker of the adjacent infant school grows in the school garden. They also had a display on the wall and could name the different garden tools that would be used when planting or growing vegetables.

Children's physical skills are developed as they play indoors and outdoors. During the inspection children accessed the outdoor play area, which is a fully enclosed garden and there they used hoops, cars and other wheeled toys. Some children were very interested in a snail which they had spotted and one of the staff took great care to talk to them about it and showing it to them at close quarters before carefully putting it back into the bushes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Friendly staff provide a warm, welcoming environment for children and their parents. Children are greeted by staff who ask how they are and what they have been doing at home. This helps

them feel secure and develop a sense of belonging. Children are encouraged to select their own activities, learning to make their own decisions.

Children attending the playgroup children are developing a good understanding of their local community and the wider world through planned activities. They celebrate a range of festivals throughout the year and positive images are displayed around the environment. Children access a varied range of resources and equipment providing they are appropriate for their age and ability. Staff are knowledgeable about children's individual needs as these are fully discussed with parents prior to care commencing. Each child's individual needs are then met in practice by the play group staff.

Children behave well and benefit from the praise and encouragement they receive from staff. They are polite, share resources and take turns when participating in the activities available. Staff act as extremely good role models and children learn from the example they set. Parents are made aware of the play group's behaviour management policy and are fully aware of the strategies that are used to manage any incidents of unwanted behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are warmly welcomed into the play group and are provided relevant information regarding its policies and practices. Newsletters, notice board displays and information given to parents ensure they are well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children's development and progress is observed, monitored and recorded and parents are fully aware they have access to these records at any time. This ensures parents are able to contribute to their child's care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel at home and are at ease in the well-organised environment. Children benefit from being cared for by staff that are qualified and experienced in childcare. All staff members have a good knowledge and understanding of children's developmental needs. They work well as a team and are clear about their individual responsibilities. All children receive good support from a staff group that enjoy their company and know them well helping them feel secure and confident.

Children are kept safe because all staff working with children have had satisfactory clearances. Good staff to child ratios ensure children receive lots of care and attention. The majority of staff hold an appropriate childcare qualification whilst others have begun training to achieve one. All staff have the opportunity to access additional training to support children's learning and development, and some have indeed accessed such training. Staff have recently undertaken 'Birth to three matters' training and some are currently attending training related to inclusive play.

Policies, procedures consents and records which detail children's needs and inform staff of procedures to follow in situations, such as a child not being collected are maintained. Informal but very regular meetings and discussions are held which provide a forum for sharing information, such as training and topic ideas.

The provision is effectively organised to enable all children to move freely around and choose from the interesting and good range of activities available. They settle well into a familiar

routine, made possible by staff who work well as a team and ensure the smooth running of the session.

Leadership and management is good. All staff work very well together as a team to support children's learning and development. Space, resources, time and grouping are well organised to promote children's enjoyment and achievement. The play group owner and staff evaluate how well the planned activities have met the learning outcomes and ensure that all areas of learning are fully covered. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the playgroup owner and staff have developed systems which they implement to assess children and ensure they are making progress towards the early learning goals. Information gained about the children's individual needs are used when staff plan the activities, as this ensures that the learning outcomes for children are met.

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):

- consider how children's independence can be further developed at snack time and how drinking water can be made more freely accessible throughout the day
- update the current child protection policy to ensure it complies with current legislation and includes the telephone numbers of the local police and social services

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 children's profiles which indicate their development and progress in accordance with the Early Years Curriculum.

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