

South Witham Village Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253492
Inspection date	02 October 2007
Inspector	Christine Hands
Setting Address	South Witham County Primary School, Water Lane, South Witham, Lincolnshire, NG33 5PH
Telephone number	07840 598203
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Registered person	The Trustees of South Witham 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?

South Witham Playgroup is a committee run provision, which opened in 1988. It is situated in the centre of South Witham village and serves the local rural community. The playgroup operates from a classroom in the main building of the village primary school. The provision has use of the school hall, playground and school field.

Currently there are 29 children from two years to four years on roll. This includes 20 funded three-year-olds. All of the children speak English as their first language. The playgroup supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup opens each weekday during school term times only. On Monday and Wednesday sessions are held in the morning and afternoon. The morning session is from 09:00 to 11:45 and the afternoon session is from 12:30 to 15:00. On Tuesday, Thursday and Friday there is only a morning session and that runs from 09:00 to 12:00. The afternoon sessions are held specifically for funded children who are preparing for school.

The playgroup employs three members of staff on a full-time basis and five relief staff who can provide cover for absences. The supervisor holds a childcare qualification.

The playgroup is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from Lincolnshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a setting where staff demonstrate a good understanding of how they can minimise the risk of cross-infection. They are encouraged to maintain their own personal hygiene by washing their hands regularly and blowing their noses when needed, carefully disposing of tissues in the bin provided. For example, explanations were given to children with regard to the need to wash their hands after they had picked up leaves, conkers and feathers from the playing field. This was in response to a statement made by one child that her mummy had told her that feathers were dirty. Independence is encouraged as children use the toilet independently.

Parents are made aware of the playgroup's policy with regard to illness such as not bringing them if they are obviously unwell and understand that if their child becomes ill during a session they will be asked to collect them as soon as possible to prevent the spread of infection. All staff hold first aid certificates and parents have given written permission for staff to obtain any medical treatment or advice in the case of an emergency which ensures that accidents can be dealt with efficiently and quickly.

Children are fortunate in that they have daily access to the school playground where they go on nature walks, look at the various animals through the school fence, run races and use the adventure equipment to develop their muscles. Parents are asked to provide suitable clothing for their children to enable them to go out in most weather conditions.

Children eat a selection of healthy snacks which include fruit and raw vegetables and have the choice of milk or water to drink. Staff have regard to any special dietary needs children may have and plan accordingly. All children sit together at snack time and help themselves to both their drink and what they would like to eat, using pieces of kitchen towel to avoid food being put directly onto the table.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, safe and secure environment where they are made to feel welcome as soon as they arrive. A member of staff stands at the entrance into the playroom and as soon as all the children have arrived a chain is used on the door to prevent unauthorised access or the chance of children leaving the room unaccompanied. Storage is adequate with toys and play resources at child height so they can be accessed independently. However, the organisation of these does not enable children to be fully aware of all that is available. There is a good selection of books in the book corner and this area is well used. There is sufficient, suitable, child-sized furniture which along with the equipment is in good clean order.

Health and safety measures are in place along with risk assessments and fire safety procedures. These policies and procedures are available for parents and regularly updated. Children's safety is considered and fire evacuation procedures are practised so that they learn how to keep calm in an emergency. Clear recording enables staff to identify and address any problems. Children

are learning to keep themselves safe, for example, they know they must stay together when on the school playing field and that they must hold hands with a partner when walking outside to play. All staff are fully aware of their role and responsibility with regard to the protection of children and have a clear policy and procedure in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup and have developed good relationships with all members of staff. They access a good range of toys and resources which not only provide interest but also meet their developmental needs. Planning and assessment systems are in place, with staff referring to the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help provide children with a suitable range of activities.

Children under three have their planned activities supported by the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff know the children well and good relationships have developed between the two. Children of all ages enjoy circle time together with stories and singing, and they happily join in with those they know.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are keen to join in with the activities on offer and spend prolonged periods of time at each one. Staff talk to the children about what is available to them and encourage them to experiment such as when building towers with different shapes and sizes of wooden blocks. Staff encourage independence and children put on and take off their own coats when playing outside as well as washing hands and using the toilet. Staff make and record observations which are then used to show how children are progressing towards the early learning goals. Plans clearly show how all six areas of learning are covered and evaluations of activities show which children need support in any area. However, although these next steps are identified staff do not always use this knowledge to provide activities to enable the more able children to reach their full potential and this is particularly noticeable with regard to the opportunities for using information, communication and technology equipment.

The staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. Staff use effective questioning techniques which encourage them to speak and think for themselves, such as, when they talk about floating and sinking and why glass pebbles sink whilst corks float. Children are developing a love of books and eagerly listen to and participate in story time as well as using the pictures in a book to tell the story for themselves. They benefit from a wide range of activities such as making models of pets out of junk, encouraging them to investigate different joining techniques and consider which they need for each job. They design their own models out of popoids and build tall towers out of wooden bricks. During this activity staff encouraged a variety of differing mathematical language, such as, how many, which one is taller or shorter as well as discussing which bricks were the most suitable to put on top to make a stable structure. Children are learning about change as they discuss the different colours of leaves in the varying seasons and extend this by walking though the school playing field and collecting leaves, conkers and what appeared to be a nut. This activity proved to be exciting for the children and offered a wonderful opportunity for them to investigate their finds when they returned to the classroom. This was lost however, as the collection was put on one side to enable them to have a story before the end of the session. A further visit to the playing field captured the children's imaginations as they played with a

parachute, bouncing leaves on top, running underneath and then trying to use it as a kite as they ran across the field, laughing and shouting as they went. The children are gaining a good insight into their own and others' cultures when they explore differences in housing, food and festivals. Although children have opportunities for some craft activities on a daily basis they are unable to access these freely which limits children's creativity and spontaneity. Children enjoy a great variety of songs both with and without actions and voice their suggestions when asked. Children's fine hand movements are developing well and they use brushes, spatulas, pencils and scissors with confidence. They learn about space as they enjoy running around outdoors, and confidently use the large apparatus for climbing and balancing activities. During adverse weather conditions they use the school hall to further develop their physical skills when taking part in dancing, moving to music and playing with a parachute. They are gaining an understanding of how their bodies change after exercise and talk about feeling hot and puffed out after they have engaged in physical activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are beginning to understand about the wider world through a variety of topics covering different cultures, for example, listening to stories about Mardi Gras and then making masks and talking about the party atmosphere. They are encouraged to talk about family events like weddings, christenings, and birthdays as well as telling each other about who lives in their house and if they have any pets. This enables children to gain an understanding that each one of us is different but that it is important that we learn about each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff have some experience of caring for children who have learning difficulties or disabilities and adapt activities to enable them to take part. Children benefit because staff work with parents and other childcare professionals in order to meet the needs of all the children.

There is a clear policy with regard to behaviour management and staff spend time explaining to the children how important it is to consider how others may feel when they do something unkind, for example, when a child knocked down a tower built by someone else he was asked how he felt when his tower had been knocked down. Staff use praise and encouragement to motivate the children and consequently children are well behaved and are kind to each other.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given good levels of information about the nursery and about early education. They are asked to share information about their children so staff are fully informed. Information is shared between home and the playgroup both at the start and end of the session and open days enable them to look at their children's work and records of achievement. Through discussion with parents it was obvious that they valued this and were aware that they could look at their child's work at any time. They are kept fully informed about children's topics via the parents' notice board, letters and information from staff. Information is shared and they are fully informed of any changes that may affect their child's welfare and development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Clear procedures are in place to ensure that no person who is not vetted may have sole charge of children. There are clear procedures in place for appointing staff as well as a robust induction system. The

registration certificate is displayed on the notice board. All staff are suitably experienced to work with children and although at present there is only one qualified member of staff it is intended that other staff will undertake a relevant childcare qualification. There is a consistent staff group enabling children to feel secure as well as ensuring that staff fully understand the needs of individual children and their families. Staff are committed and dedicated to providing for the children's well-being, safety and care. Staff development is promoted through a robust appraisal system. Staff extend their skills through regular training opportunities which will further develop the effectiveness of the service provided. Confidentiality is observed and all records are kept secure.

Leadership and management is good. The supervisor has a clear vision for the future in ways that the group can continue to improve the care and education of the children. Planning clearly demonstrates the learning intentions, however, staff are not fully aware that in order to maintain children's enthusiasm, learning experiences must be followed through at the time. For example, children enjoyed their time on a nature walk collecting a variety of different things, were told about what they had collected at the time but there were no opportunities to cut open the conkers and other nuts they had so eagerly collected. However, the staff team is strong and they work closely together to motivate the children. Staff are continually evaluating the provision and are committed to improving what they are currently offering. Staff monitor and evaluate what they are doing with the children and are continually looking at differing ways to help children to learn.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection a recommendation was made that staff needed to develop their knowledge with regard to their understanding of special needs. The group now have a special educational needs co-ordinator in place who works closely with the partnership and parents to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of all children within the group.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 1 2004 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):

- provide an action plan to demonstrate how at least half of all childcare staff will hold a Level 2 qualification appropriate for the care and development of children.

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):

- provide opportunities for children to have free access to resources with special regard to craft materials and information, communication and technology equipment.

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