

# Sharpness Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101524
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Zahida Hatia
<b>Setting Address</b>	c/o Sharpness Primary School, Newtown, Berkeley, Gloucestershire, GL13 9NU
<b>Telephone number</b>	07759 308427 or 01453 811413 play leader
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Sharpness Playgroup 1003222
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sharpness Playgroup opened in 1982. It operates from a building in the grounds of the village primary school in Sharpness in Gloucestershire. It serves the local community and surrounding villages. The group is run by a management committee elected from parents of children who attend.

There are currently 15 children on roll. This includes 13 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions and are admitted from the age of two-years-nine-months. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and or disabilities. There are currently no children on roll, who have English as an additional language.

The group opens three days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00-12.00.

There are three staff working with the children and parents provide additional support on a rota system, one member of staff is studying towards a National Vocational Qualification in Childcare and Education at Level 3 and one staff at level 2. The setting receives support from the Early Years and Childcare Services support worker.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Staff provide children with a good level of support and guidance to help them gain and develop an age-appropriate understanding of hygiene and personal care. They provide a clean and well-maintained environment and have established robust systems to monitor the medical needs of individual children.

Children enjoy a range of age-appropriate and well-planned activities that enable them to explore, test and develop their physical skills. Staff have a keen knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and have a good understanding of each child's stage of development. Children are supported effectively by staff as they try new experiences, such as sampling new and exotic fruits at snack time. Older children have a positive attitude to physical exercise such as running, jumping and digging and planting vegetables as staff provide a range of activities to challenge and extend their physical development. Children's physical skills develop and improve through an appropriate variety of experiences. For example, an excellent range of tools is available for planting outdoors and craft and construction activities.

Children's individual health needs are monitored effectively by staff and snacks are planned according to children's dietary requirements. They help themselves to easily accessible drinking water throughout the day and enjoy fresh fruit at snack time. Children are beginning to understand the value of good nutrition as staff use imaginative techniques to explain the importance of healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. For example, children are actively encouraged to participate in caring for the allotment plot used by the playgroup. Children learn about growing fruit and vegetables and this encourages them to think about where fresh produce comes from and how to be self sufficient. Children participate with recycling waste such as collecting all peelings from the fruit and vegetables from snack times during the week and emptying this onto the compost heap. Children happily and confidently explain that the compost heap helps to feed their garden and this helps to grow flowers and fresh produce for all to enjoy.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming, safe and secure environment. Safety equipment is in place throughout the setting. Children can confidently move around the spacious play areas indoors and help themselves to a range of easily accessible, age-appropriate resources and activities. Children make independent choices and decisions about their play using safe and suitable equipment. Resources are checked regularly for loose or broken parts. Children feel a sense of belonging. Their art and craft work is creatively displayed and photographs show them enjoying a number of different activities. Staff continually adapt the free play areas, such as role play, to relate to the planned topics and activities. Resources are rotated to maintain stimulation and interest.

Children are kept safe and secure when playing indoors and outside. Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff use detailed risk assessments to help reduce potential hazards. Children cannot leave the premises unsupervised and there is no unauthorised access

to children. They are escorted by staff to the school playground and their own lower outdoor play area. They are kept safe when playing outdoors. The gate is securely locked and staff supervise the children. Children are protected by the health and safety practices and procedures staff follow to help prevent accidents. Fire fighting equipment is in place and the fire evacuation procedure is clearly displayed and practised regularly with the children. Older children clearly explain what they must do in an emergency and where they must go to. Children are kept safe on outings as sensible adult-child ratios are maintained and permission is obtained from parents.

Children are protected by staff who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child protection policies and procedures. Children are kept safe and secure by staff. The lost and uncollected child policy is in place and the attendance of children, staff and visitors is recorded. There are secure systems in place to protect children from non-vetted persons. All outer doors are locked to prevent unauthorised access and keys are stored nearby in case of emergencies. Children are protected by the staff ensuring that only persons known by them collect the children. Children's safety and well-being is enhanced by the staff's commitment in undertaking additional training.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the Playgroup. They achieve well because staff are skilled and use their sound understanding of child development and of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage', to provide good quality care and education. Staff use their knowledge of child development effectively to plan activities and resources that are accessible and age-appropriate in accordance with individual children's abilities.

Staff have created a very relaxed and supportive learning environment. They are perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions successfully to challenge children's thinking and language skills. They use effective systems of assessment to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and understand what children need to do next to develop their learning.

Staff support early communication skills effectively through high quality adult-child interactions. Children relate well to each other and have a good relationship with staff. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a good range of planned activities, for example, when engaged in role-play or playing outdoors.

### **Nursery education**

Staff have a sound knowledge of the early learning goals and plan activities to cover all areas of learning. They know children well and monitor their individual progress effectively. Staff work well together to develop interesting and challenging activities for children, sometimes building on children's own ideas, such as the fruit and vegetable shop. Children are grouped according to the activity and staff are deployed well to ensure the smooth running of the session. Staff interact closely with children to offer support when needed and to encourage children's participation. They are settled well and relaxed in the familiar routine. Children develop confidence as they role play with adults and respond to discussion topics, such as health.

Children develop communication skills through conversation especially during role play and at story time when they discuss the book. They choose to look at books for themselves in the comfortable and quiet area of the room. Children enjoy singing and action songs, so are becoming familiar with word patterns. Their vocabulary is extended through interesting activities as they learn about pineapples and kiwi fruits. They practise writing skills, for instance, as they make shopping lists for the fruit and vegetable shop. Children use resources on the writing table and make attempts at writing their name. The play areas, although well-resourced, are not particularly well labelled so it is not always easy for children to independently self select their own toys and activities.

Children spontaneously practise counting themselves, for example, the number of oranges at the grocer's shop during role play. The number area has resources so that children learn to link counting with number symbols. However, there are fewer opportunities to develop calculating skills, such as basic adding and subtracting. Children recognise shapes as they roll out play dough and make sausage and circles. They become familiar with patterns as they investigate what different fruits look like and spot patterns in the fruit when cut open. Children develop good hand-eye coordination when they play in the water tray. They carefully pour water using different containers. They use mathematical language as they discuss that one container is full and another empty.

Outdoor play area is a strength of the playgroup. Children have a good range of choices as to where they play; they are able to choose from three different areas outdoors. The children can choose to play in the schools play ground using large hoops, balls and peddle cars and other vehicles. They also have a climbing area of their own which has been resourced through the committee's fund raising activities. The children are able to learn about nature and how and where fresh produce come from as they have an allotment plot designated to the playgroup. Staff are keen to give children hands on experience with digging, seeding and taking care of their plot. Children move around confidently and with increasing control during physical play indoor and outdoors. Their coordination and handling of small tools is promoted well as they regularly use implements during various play activities. The indoor activities are interesting and challenging, for instance, the musical instruments help children to develop their own sense of rhythm and they learn to listen to others efforts as they make different sounds.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children's understanding of equality is promoted through activities that encourage equal play. The children play harmoniously together as they learn to share and take turns. They enjoy pretending to be the 'Grocer', weighing out the fruit and vegetables and handling money. Children are familiar with the routine of the playgroup. They help tidy up and explain that it is nearly snack time. Children begin to value each other's contributions in group-time activities. They generally sit quietly during circle-time and listen to staff during story time. They listen to their friends as they sing nursery rhymes. Children are generally well motivated in their play and actively engaged throughout their time spent in the nursery. Children develop good relationships with each other, as they sit together and share experiences. They form good relationships with the staff who are on hand to help, praise and support the children during the session. Children are confident, friendly and extremely happy in the setting. Their individual care needs are known and met by staff in discussion with their parents. Children are becoming aware of the wider society as they explore their own and others' cultures and traditions, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali but recourse to help children learn about the wider diversity is limited.

Children are generally well behaved. They respond to staff's consistently positive strategies, such as giving time to listen, praising achievements and providing individual support and comfort. Children form good relationships with staff and other children. They become aware of their own needs and the needs of others and begin to learn patience and understanding. Children learn about right and wrong as the staff consistently encourage their understanding as they play together. They share resources and show a willingness to help put away toys and equipment when requested by staff. Children make suitable choices and decisions about their play. Their confidence and self-assurance is fully encouraged. These positive approaches foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from the staff's friendly relationship with parents. Parents are provided with written information about the setting, the early years curriculum and the group's policies and procedures, prior to a child starting the group. They are kept up to date through newsletters and informal discussion with staff at either the beginning or end of the session. Staff are very welcoming and approachable and answer parents' questions. Parents are able to access children's developmental records if they wish. However, there are as yet no systematic arrangements to ensure parents receive information about children's progress towards the early learning goals or contribute to ongoing assessments. Parents are not sufficiently encouraged to be meaningfully involved in their children's learning, ensuring everyone works to the best effect for the children's benefit.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for by adults who have a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. The staff are qualified and experienced. The recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. The induction procedure ensures that the playgroup policies and procedures are applied and staff appraisals are completed. Individual training needs are recognised and continual training and development is supported. Staff and planning meetings are encouraged to make sure continuity is maintained and information and curriculum planning developed in the interest of the children. Although staff are consistent with planning and assessing children's ongoing progress, there are not enough procedures in place so that all parents are informed of their children's development especially regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum or the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Consequently parents are not able to fully support their children's progress at home. Staff use appropriate strategies to manage children's behaviour, which are consistently applied in practice. Members of staff work well together as a team and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The premises are generally well organised and indoor space is suitably laid out to maximise play opportunities. Children are provided with opportunities to enable choice and decision making and to encourage exploring the environment through their senses. Children have plenty of opportunity to learn about natural materials to enable investigation and exploration. Documentation and record keeping that ensures the efficient and safe management of the provision which contributes to the health, safety and well-being of children, is in place.

The leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. The play leader is qualified with many years experience, enhanced through training and sound knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Sound systems are in place to promote satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. The play leader has clear aims to promote children's learning. She meets regularly with staff who are all knowledgeable, skilled and committed to each child's development. The clear management structure supports staff members who know their roles

and responsibilities well. Appraisals and training needs are monitored to promote their professional development. The active committee have sound systems for staff checks, recruitment and induction, Although the committee is newly formed the joint chairpersons have already recognised how the group can make improvements to the provision with the support of the staff. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the group were asked to; devise an appropriate induction programme for new staff. A new committee has been elected since the last inspection and they are working to build and develop robust policies and procedures. A comprehensive induction programme has now been devised for new staff and committee members.

### **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 satisfactory.

### **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):

#### **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):

- develop home to setting links to promote continuity of children's learning and so parents are better informed of their children's progress
- provide activities and play materials which reflect diversity

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)