

Mitton Manor Playgroup and After School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101658
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Inspector	Angela Cole
Setting Address	Mitton Manor Primary School, Carrant Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 8AR
Telephone number	07799 757345
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Registered person	The Trustees of Mitton Manor Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Mitton Manor Playgroup and After School Club opened in 1986 as a community group with charitable status, and is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and carers. The group owns a large, extended building sited in the grounds of a primary school in a residential area on the outskirts of Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire. Children have immediate access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The setting also uses the school hall and outside areas. A maximum of 30 children may attend the group at any one time.

The playgroup is open each weekday during school term times. Sessions begin with Earlybirds, where breakfast is available from 08.30, and continues to 11.30. Tuesday and Thursday sessions from 12.30 to 15.00 are for younger children. There are currently 39 children from two years nine months to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for nursery education. Though many children live locally, others come from a much wider area. The setting supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. Staff have experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup employs four staff to work with the children. All hold appropriate early years qualifications and are supported by a parent helper on a regular basis. The playgroup also receives support from school staff and fieldworkers from the Gloucestershire Playgroup and Toddler Association. The group has received the Gloucestershire Inclusive Practice Award.

The after school club opened in March 2003 and is located in the same premises as the playgroup. It is open each weekday during term time from 15.15 to 17.45. There are currently 20 children aged from four to under eight years on roll, who all attend the adjacent Mitton Manor Primary School. The group also cares for older children. The club employs four staff who all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They have space to move freely indoors and outdoors, for example, in circle games with repeated movements. They use a variety of equipment to climb and balance. Children demonstrate neat, careful movements with small tools as, for example, they scrape glue from brushes and draw well formed squares. They develop good self care skills in dressing, take care of their belongings and are keen helpers for tidying.

Children's good health is actively promoted as staff follow effective hygiene procedures, such as use of colour coded cloths. Children are cared for in regularly maintained premises and begin to appreciate the value of cleanliness as they help with sweeping. They learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well planned routines prompted by picture sequences for toileting. However, children risk cross infection by sharing the session's towel provided alongside paper towels and a hand dryer, and by older ones not washing before their first, brief snack. All children benefit from consistent care in the group and at home fostered by appropriate contact and documentation for medication and accidents.

The children help themselves to water throughout the sessions and have regular drinks with their food that include milk or water. The group takes good account of parents' wishes and children's choices to provide varied snacks, including 'Earlybird' breakfasts, that appeal to children and meet their dietary needs. These include some healthy cereals and fruit and children talk about nutritious food in their role play, saying, 'There's no brown bread'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely in premises that are clean, suitably maintained, and kept at an appropriate temperature for their comfort. They have ample space for their activities that is well organised to meet their play and care needs. Children use equipment which is safe and suitable for their stage of development and can access their toys and equipment easily and safely from low-level storage.

Staff are well deployed to ensure that children are appropriately supervised at all times. Children move freely and safely within the child-orientated environment as possible risks are identified and minimised. Staff are vigilant so that children do not leave the premises unsupervised and so that access to the premises is monitored as the after-school-club door remains unlocked.

Children begin to learn to keep themselves safe as they regularly practise leaving in an emergency and remind others of the reasons for rules, such as 'no running indoors'.

The staff safeguard and promote children's welfare and have all the required procedures and documents in place. For example, the staff have attended relevant training to develop their understanding of first aid and of how to protect children and are familiar with local child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children at the playgroup enjoy the stimulating range and balance of activities that helps them make very good progress in all areas of their development. The routine effectively includes their care needs, active and quieter times and children benefit from the staff's flexibility. For example, when a child wanted to repeat the 'shepherds and wolves' game, everyone went outside again. Staff have a very good understanding of child development so they effectively use their observations of what children do to help them plan the next steps in their play. The children hugely benefit as all staff are very responsive, for example, supporting their art and craft, role play, reading and dough play by regularly making helpful comments, asking open questions and helping children to think.

The children greatly enjoy themselves in the after school club. They have free choice of the wide range of toys and equipment stored in the playgroup, including some games and activities for older ones. After school, the children spend a long time at their chosen activities, for example, creating a complex scene in the sand and singing quietly to themselves as they are absorbed in their play. Staff are caring and attentive, particularly towards any child who is playing away from others. They join in the children's chosen table games, sit by those at electronic toys and promote some special activities, such as painting plates, framing photos and cooking pizzas.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning. This is because staff have a sound understanding of how children learn and increasingly use the Foundation Stage to provide very good quality care and education. They record children's responses and share their observations with the other staff. The curriculum planning for the group is suitably detailed and includes notes on individual children to inform future plans. Some very good teaching methods support children to learn and behave well, including strong focus on staff following children's play ideas, consolidation of skills and good use of spontaneous learning opportunities. Each child is challenged at their own level so they make very good progress, for example, in pre-reading and writing skills. Children usually have free access to the outdoor area for part of the session where the equipment mainly supports their physical development. Effective use is made of good-quality, indoor resources to stimulate children to develop chosen activities using their own ideas.

Children develop very good communication skills. They learn many new words, including 'stable', and confidently sound initial letters of their names. Children respond well to strategies to help them listen, including 'reading' repeated words in stories such as 'Did you know?' They recognise symbols for helpers and are keen to discuss pictures. They confidently use one-handed tools to make marks, name their work when they are ready and enjoy 'writing' shopping lists. Children make very good progress in relation to their starting points in mathematical development. They

say many number words in their play, for example, 'charging' £68 for bread and recognising '2' on the drinks table notice. They confidently count in routines, including how many children have the same drink and know two pieces result from breaking a biscuit in half. They correctly use many shape and position words, for example, saying, 'I am going in a circle'.

Children gain a good knowledge and understanding of the world about them. They are curious and closely examine many objects and materials. For example, they investigate how water runs from a tipping tray, and explore cooking ingredients to make fairy cakes. Through extensive use of construction sets, children have very good opportunities to use tools, for example, to lay tracks. They show good interest in technology to create computer pictures. They recall significant events, including long journeys and trips to the hospital, abbey and supermarket by train. Stories, crafts and music effectively help them learn about special occasions, such as Christmas. All children's creativity is valued so there are no differences in learning between different groups, such as boys and girls. Children enthusiastically respond to action songs, increasingly clapping and playing instruments on the beat. They often use a variety of textures and colours, including materials for sequinned cards. They extensively imagine in their role-play, such as doctors with their 'medicine'. They enjoy using all their senses, for example, creating a dough 'snowman cake'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are effectively included and their differences are acknowledged and valued. Staff build highly secure relationships with children so their needs and preferences are well understood. As a result, children learn to be helpful towards each other, for example, bringing a tissue. Staff provide resources that positively represent the children who attend as well as giving them experience of needs that are different from their own. Children make their own 'smile' poster showing different faces and this helps them to develop a positive attitude to others.

Children learning English as an additional language receive personal support to settle and make rapid progress to understand and communicate. This is because adults take the trouble to speak clearly and use emphatic praise. Staff have previous experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in close liaison with parents and other professionals. Children's behaviour is managed sensitively and consistently. This is because staff anticipate and reinforce boundaries so that children learn to sort out their own differences, for example, to share a favourite car. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children and their parents appreciate the warm, bright and welcoming environment. They receive consistent care as parents give all required permissions that staff closely heed. Children benefit from the good quality information and support given to new and existing families. Parents are regularly informed about their children's progress, for example, in general, termly reports. Staff increasingly note parents' comments about children's home achievements to support their learning in the group.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Significant changes are reported to Ofsted and there are robust procedures for vetting new staff, though systems are not developed to check their ongoing suitability to care for children. People who are not

vetted are never left alone with children as, for example, new personnel work alongside staff for their induction. A log for any complaint is set up to include the necessary information.

The operational plan works well in practice. Staff are suitably qualified and very experienced to provide care for the different age groups and children benefit from generous ratios maintained throughout the day. Children are generally grouped according to choice and a keyworker system is established for those who require additional support. The space and current resources are well organised to meet the children's needs. All required documentation is in place and the register for the after-school club clearly shows children's times of attendance.

Leadership and management are good. The new committee is keen, enthusiastic and very supportive so that staff are welcome to share any issues. Staff have clearly defined roles and continue to be fully supported through strong leadership to update their practice. The setting is well aware of its own strengths and areas for development and is willing to follow advice and keep self assessment up to date. The close knit team of staff work well together each day and have weekly, formal meeting to discuss the children's needs and to monitor the nursery education. Their high commitment means that every child matters.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the setting improved procedures for emergency treatment for children. Staff now seek all parents' permission for emergency medical advice or treatment at the time of their placement to support the children's health care.

In the previous education inspection, no significant weaknesses were noted and the playgroup was asked to further consider the planning and assessment processes. Staff now include stepping stones in the written, medium-term plans to correspond with those highlighted in the assessments of children's progress. This clearer linking ensures that children's learning needs are monitored and that the nursery education is effective.

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 the 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):

- make sure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing
- ensure that there are effective procedures in place for checking the ongoing suitability of staff to work with 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):

- develop further outdoor opportunities for children's learning.

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