

East Community Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256760
Inspection date	16 November 2007
Inspector	Lesley Barrett
Setting Address	East Community Complex, 68-72 Padholme Road, Peterborough, Cambs, PE1 5EN
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Registered person	East Communtiy 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?

East Community Playgroup operates from a hall in East Community Centre, which is in the central area of Peterborough. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 12:00 each weekday morning.

There are currently 22 children on roll all of whom are funded. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently has five children attending who have English as an additional language. There are no children with learning disabilities and/or disabilities attending.

Five staff work with the children. Over half of these staff have a recognised early years qualification.

The setting receives support from an Early Years Pedagogical worker and Childcare advisor from the local Sure Start Strategic Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an environment where procedures are generally effective in reducing the risk from cross-infection. For example, staff ensure surfaces are clean before preparing and serving snacks. Children are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet and before snacks. However, they are not provided with soap to wash their hands which does not fully prevent the risk of cross-contamination and help children to learn about effective hand washing practices. Children's health is promoted as staff implement the settings clear policies regarding children who are unwell and the exclusion periods for infectious diseases. Effective systems for recording accidents and medication and an adequate number of staff with first aid qualifications contributes to children's immediate safety and welfare.

Children benefit from a varied and healthy snack menu to promote their health and development and help them learn about a healthy diet. For example, they are offered dried or fresh fruit, raw vegetables and unsweetened biscuits. Staff ensure that they are aware of any allergies or dietary requirements so that children's individual needs are met. Children all sit together for their snack however, the organisation of this time does not present a rich learning environment. Consequently, there are missed opportunities for children to develop their social skills and learning.

All children enjoy a varied range of activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills both when using large and small apparatus. They are able to freely access outdoor play during part of the session which enables children to make choices about where they play. Children enjoy using ride on toys, playing with balls and hoops and running around creating their own imaginary play. Inside they can develop their climbing skills as they use the small frame and slide and are assisted when climbing onto the rocking horse. There are good opportunities for children to practise their fine motor skills and engage in activities requiring hand and eye coordination such as rolling out play dough, using scissors and using the computer mouse. A comfortable area is created for children who wish to play quietly or sit and look at books.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Staff create a bright and stimulating atmosphere and warmly welcome children and their families. Children use good quality equipment and play materials and there are sound systems in place to check that they remain safe for them to use. Staff pay good attention to safety issues when presenting toys and activities, ensuring that they are appropriate for the ages of children using them and allowing adequate space between activities to minimise the risk of trips and falls. Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe through discussions with staff, who use spontaneous activities to promote children's understanding. For example, children have safety goggles to use when they play with the tool kit.

Children's safety is well protected as the premises are kept secure to prevent unauthorised entry or a child leaving unsupervised. Robust systems are in place for the arrival and departure of children as a member of staff remains at the entrance door to prevent children leaving unsupervised. Constant supervision of children inside and in the outdoor play area minimises

risks and ensures they are able to move around safely. Regular fire drills are carried out helping children and staff learn about the importance of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.

Children's welfare is effectively promoted because staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities regarding child protection. They are fully familiar with the setting's policies and procedures and the roles and responsibilities of all staff within this. Procedures are in place to ensure that children are never released to an adult unless they have prior written consent from parents which further protect children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children under three years benefit from the staffs sound knowledge of the way in which children develop. The key worker system ensures that children receive sufficient support or challenge and flexible planning allows children's individual interests to be acknowledged and included. Children are confident in their relationships with the staff and enjoy the warm interaction. Younger children confidently engage in all the activities provided, which supports their development. Children are curious and enjoy investigating the range of learning experiences offered each day. They acquire new knowledge and skills, for example, as they join in with role play and make cakes with the play dough. However, the organisation of the snack time for younger children is not appropriately managed to meet their individual needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching & learning is good. Children are benefiting from the staff's secure understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn. Regular use of observations, clear planning, photographs and assessments mean that staff know the children well and ably build upon children's interests and support them to extend their learning. Effective use of the key worker system enables staff to differentiate activities to meet children's differing needs, abilities and interests. Children are happy to learn, they are enthusiastic and are interested in their play. They spend time concentrating on their tasks and share their time as they work alone or in small groups. Their independence through play is well supported by staff organising the environment and their planning to offer a balance of child-led and adult direct activities. Staff offer children resources which will interest and engage them. For example, tool kits and safety check lists. These experiences help children to gain confidence, express their thoughts and feelings use their creative development and imagination which consequently supports their learning. However, there are missed opportunities for children to increase their independence skills during snack time. Children are developing a sense of community as staff know their backgrounds well and talk to the children about their family members.

Staff are skilled at encouraging children's language development. They ask lots of questions and allow children to talk freely about real and imagined experiences. Children have good opportunities to practise mark making through a range of activities such as, on chalk boards, at a writing table and during role play. This provides them with opportunities to develop early writing skills. Most children enjoy story time, they listen with interest and predict what's going to happen next. They listen to simple instructions from staff for example, it's tidy away time and are familiar with routines. Children are provided with practical activities to recognise letters such as, the use of letters in the sand tray. Children use mathematical language through their play; they recognise shapes and count items when encouraged to by staff. Although there are missed opportunities for spontaneous mathematical learning through practical activities such

as, setting the table for snack. Children are using simple addition and subtraction during songs. They are learning to solve simple problems as they follow instructions when creating shapes from magna blocks.

Children develop their knowledge & understanding of the world through many first hand, practical, fun activities. For example, planting sunflower seeds. Through food tasting and parents sharing information about their families children are beginning to gain an awareness of cultures and beliefs of others. Children are provided with regular opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills with regard to information technology as they use the computer, a camera and play phones.

Children use their imagination well in art, design music and role play. For example, they act out familiar experiences in the home corner such as, serving cups of tea and biscuits. They act out the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' as they ask for the food to take to Grandma. Staff facilitate the children's imaginary play very well, they pay for 'building work' completed, writing out cheques and children are able to access to resources to produce a receipt. They enjoy singing at the end of each session individually and as a group. Staff support children well during this to help them gain confidence. Children explore colour and textures as they choose to paint freely and create their own individual 'masterpieces' with glue and glitter.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the setting and are valued and respected. Staff have a good knowledge of children's individual needs through effective, up to date documentation and ongoing communication with parents and other professionals. This supports all children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to integrate well within the nursery. Staff work closely with parents to support children who speak English as an additional language. Children are beginning to develop an awareness of the wider world by accessing a good range of play resources that reflect positive images of race, gender and disability, and by celebrating different festivals. Wherever possible, staff involve parents in planned activities.

Children's behaviour is good. They are learning to use good manners and be kind to each other. Staff are consistent in their approach, which helps children to learn about acceptable behaviours. Clear explanations are given when asking a child not to do something, helping them to understand the consequences of their actions. Positive behaviour and children's efforts are consistently praised and encouraged. This enables them to develop a sense of purpose and helps to prevent disruptive behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with the parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Warm and friendly relationships exist between the parents and staff team. Parents speak highly of the setting and particularly welcome the ease at which they feel that they can approach staff about their children's progress and achievements. Parents are provided with good information about the Foundation Stage curriculum through information booklets and newsletters. Parents have regular access to their children's assessment files and half-term reports are provided to ensure that parents are kept up-to date with their child's progress. This sharing of information ensures that the needs of their children are met which has a positive effect on the children's development and learning. Effective procedures are in place to help new children settle, parents are encouraged to visit and stay with their children helping them to gain confidence and ease the separation process. Key workers build good relationships with parents to help support the

care and education of children, this enables them to know the children well and address any concerns in a sensitive and supportive manner. A full range of policies and procedures are made available to parents although the complaints procedures does not currently include the details of the regulator which is a requirement of the National Standards. Therefore parents are not provided with all the necessary information should they wish to raise a concern.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are content because staff have developed warm and caring relationships with them. The setting uses effective recruitment procedures, which ensure that the staff have suitable experience and qualifications to work with children. Sessions generally run smoothly as effective adult-to-child ratios are maintained. However, staff are not always proactive in monitoring the effectiveness of the whole of the session and adapting it to meet the needs of the children such as, the organisation of snack time. Policies and procedures are clear, comprehensive and regularly updated. All staff are familiar with their content to ensure children are well cared for. Staff attend training courses to keep up to date with current childcare issues and trends. As a result, children benefit from practices which are in line with current ideas and legislation.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The supervisor works directly with the staff and children, and provides a good role model. The supervisor is well supported by a committed and enthusiastic staff team. Staff are competent within their roles because the supervisor sets out clear expectations about the delivery of the curriculum and supports them well. These skills and knowledge are supporting the children's learning and development well. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection two recommendations were raised. These related to ensuring that children were provided with sufficient challenge in the sand tray and ensuring that at least one member of staff had a current first aid certificate. Children are now provided with sufficient sand and resources to make sand play fun and interesting. Sufficient staff now have a relevant first aid qualification to ensure that there is at least one member of staff who has training in this area on the premises at all times. This benefits children's health and well-being.

At the last nursery education inspection two recommendations were raised. These were to give greater emphasis to the provision of outside play and review the organisation of large group time. Staff have reviewed the provision of outdoor equipment and provide children with a variety of resources to use outdoors daily, in addition to this they assess children's individual needs and provide appropriate resources accordingly. The development of the outdoor play area is an ongoing project which staff are fund raising for to ensure that this can be developed to its full potential. Sessions are now generally organised successfully to meet children's individual needs however, the organisation of snack time needs reviewing and has been addressed as part of this inspection.

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.

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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):

- take positive steps to promote the good health of children (this particular refers to providing soap for hand washing)
- ensure that the complaints procedure includes the address and telephone number of the regulator.

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):

- review the organisation of snack time to ensure that a rich learning environment is provided for all children (also applies to care).

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