

Blackfordby Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226195
Inspection date	23 November 2007
Inspector	Linda Gail Moore
Setting Address	Village Hall, Sandtop Lane, Blackfordby, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE11 8AL
Telephone number	01283 216279
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Blackfordby 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?

Blackfordby Pre-School and Playgroup opened over 30 years ago. It is committee managed. The playgroup operates from Blackfordby Village Hall, and serves the local community and surrounding villages. The accommodation consists of one large hall with associated toilet and kitchen facilities. An additional side hall is available and used occasionally by the group. There is no outdoor play area.

The playgroup opens Monday to Friday from 09:15 to 11:45 and Wednesdays 12:45 to 15:15, during school term times only. There are currently 47 children from two years to four years on roll. This includes 21 funded three-year-olds and one funded four-year-old. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties/disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

There are six staff who work with the children. The leader and assistant leader hold National Vocational Qualifications to Level 3 (NVQ 3) in childcare and education and three staff hold National Vocational Qualifications to Level 2. Three staff are working towards Level 3. The playgroup receives the support of a teacher from the Local Authority Early Years team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well-supported by staff. Health and hygiene policies and cleaning routines are in place to guide staff and ensure the premises are clean and good personal hygiene is practised. Staff wash their hands before preparing snacks and use an anti-bacterial solution to clean tables, these procedures help to prevent cross-contamination. Children learn the importance of good health and hygiene through the routine and activities. They know to wash their hands before snack time and after using the toilet. A step is available to enable children to do this independently and children receive a high level of support from staff to ensure they use soap and dry their hands afterwards with paper towels. This helps to prevent the spread of infection. Staff respond sensitively to children if they are ill and are well informed about their individual healthcare needs. Detailed documentation and consents are in place to support this. An appropriately-stocked first aid kit is easily accessible and there are a number of first aid qualified staff and clear processes for dealing with accidents. Permission has been sought to seek emergency medical treatment or advice at the time of placement. As a result children's needs are fully met in the event of an accident

Children are offered nutritious snacks to satisfy their hunger. Fruit is available each day and staff are in the process of implementing further healthy food options such as dried fruit and vegetable sticks. Children sit together at tables to eat their snack where they talk and share food, this makes snack time a sociable and enjoyable occasion. They are encouraged to help give out snacks and on occasions have the opportunity to spread and cut food. More regular opportunities to do this would further promote children's independence skills. Fresh drinking water is available for children to access throughout the session. This helps them to learn to recognise when they are thirsty to prevent them becoming dehydrated.

Children benefit from regular opportunities to participate in physical play. They make good use of the indoor play area where there is plenty of space for physical activities. They enthusiastically use a range of equipment including a soft play, tunnels, cars and bikes. Children develop climbing and balancing skills as they negotiate equipment such as the balancing beam placed over a soft mat and a climbing frame. They enjoy music and movement sessions and games. Children learn about the importance of healthy eating and lifestyles through discussion and activities. They learn how exercise has a positive impact on their bodies. Staff talk to them about how they feel before and after exercise and to recognise the changes for example, they get hot and their heart beats faster. These activities encourage a positive attitude towards exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment, colourful displays brighten the play room and areas are set up with activities for when children arrive. This helps them to feel secure and comfortable and as a result they settle quickly and grow in confidence. The premises are safe, the main entrance door is kept locked during the session, this prevents unknown persons gaining unsupervised access to the premises. There is an effective system for managing children's arrival and departure times. Staff ensure children are safely delivered and collected by authorised persons. Policies and procedures are effectively followed to promote children's safety in the setting and when on outings. Staff check rooms before children arrive each session, as the

premises are used by other groups. This ensures everywhere is safe. A full risk assessment has been completed to ensure potential hazards are identified, however this needs to be reviewed. Frequent emergency evacuations are practised with the children and staff to ensure everyone concerned knows what to do in the event of a fire. This helps to keep them safe.

Children benefit from the well maintained and spacious premises. This provides scope for a wide range of play to create a stimulating and child-friendly environment. Notice boards display children's art work and photographs, this places value on their work and raises self-esteem. They freely self-select from an extensive range of safe and suitable toys and equipment that are well-maintained and meet safety standards. Good attention is given to the condition of resources, staff check on a daily basis to ensure they are clean and safe. Children are supervised effectively by staff who engage well with children to ensure they are happy and occupied. The setting operates with a high ratio of staff, who are aware of where to place themselves during play. They move around constantly to engage with children and to offer support and guidance. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through a range of organised activities and experiences to raise their awareness. All staff have completed child protection training and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. Effective guidelines are in place to ensure all staff have up to date knowledge of the procedures to follow should they have a concern. As a result children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident in the setting's welcoming and caring environment. They are developing appropriate relationships with both their peer group and adults and receive a good level of support when needed. They develop confidence and self-esteem as staff praise them appropriately and show a high level of interest in what they say and do. Staff challenge them effectively during interaction to make them think and question. Children respond enthusiastically and enjoy being able to impart their knowledge and demonstrate what they know. They are given good opportunities to develop their competence as young learners through a wide variety of activities and experiences. On arrival they run in excitedly and quickly select an activity from around the large play room. They play together well and are interested and absorbed in what they do. Remaining well occupied throughout each session.

Children's learning, creative and imaginative skills are well promoted. They play imaginatively during role play in the home corner or shop. All children were observed to take an active part and enjoy participating at their own level whether caring for their babies in the home corner or playing with the money and till in the shopping area. Staff help to extend their learning as they sit and talk to children about what they are doing such as making shopping lists. Staff notice a child looking at a map on the wall. They join the child and together talk about where he lives, the different places in the area that he knows and look for where he went on holiday. Staff are skilled in knowing when to intervene to extend children's interest and when to stand back to allow them to create, investigate and explore for themselves. Children produce concerts for their parents at Christmas and Easter time and create art work with a variety of mediums such as paints, glue and junk modelling. These activities help them to represent their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. They take their art work home and this adds to their pleasure and sense of achievement.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use their competent understanding of the Foundation Stage to provide a broad range of activities that are balanced across the six areas of learning. They use a good range of teaching methods to excite and motivate children to learn and are skilled at checking out what knowledge the children have retained and what their next steps should be. They adapt their questioning skills and the routine to take account of individual children's level of understanding and interest. Staff have a good understanding of how their interaction impacts upon the children's learning and involvement. They are effective in gaining and maintaining children's interest, as they sit with them, ask questions and give support when needed. This help children to remain focused and persist for some time. Planning incorporates a broad range of play that encourages new and exciting experiences. Each session provides a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities and a range of different teaching environments such as one to one work, small group and large group time. Children enjoy and benefit from one to one support during the daily reading session. They are encouraged to talk about their book, what they did or did not enjoy. Some children can relate the whole story back. Staff observe how each child handles their book and if they know the difference between print and pictures. Staff use good questioning to encourage children to think and demonstrate what they know. Children look forward to their session and this promotes their enjoyment and love of books. Staff use the information they gain from daily observations to record where each child is at within the stepping stones. This means they can accurately monitor each child's progress and plan appropriately for their next steps in learning. Planned focused activities contain a clear learning intention and staff are aware of what differentiation is needed within an activity for each child. As a result children are appropriately challenged and make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children enjoy their time at the setting and have a very positive attitude to learning. They are confident to try new activities and initiate ideas for example, when playing with triangle shapes one child notices that two make a star. She asks if they can make Christmas decorations with this shape. Staff organise this as an activity and use children's ideas for how to decorate their shape. Children maintain attention and concentrate well for example, as they sit during registration time. They listen and watch carefully as staff in turn ask them to talk about their 'show and tell' items. They talk confidently about their item to the group and then put it on the display table for all to share. Children demonstrate great confidence when speaking out in front of a large group and are beginning to develop their language well to relate experiences. They initiate conversations with staff as they talk about their families and what they have been doing at home. They show good interest in books and this is extended well within the setting as a book loan service is offered. Children have access to a good range and understand the difference between fact and fiction books, having choice from the two. Books are available during each session in the book corner and children access this area independently and handle them well. These include photographic story books put together by staff, using photographs of the children. These are particularly popular along with stories read by staff. Children understand print carries meaning. They can recognise their name card using different colour and shaped cards as prompts for younger children. Older children can write their own name on pictures and younger ones are given help to do this. They have good opportunities to practise mark-marking and staff extend this by demonstrating with paper and chalk at the easel, or writing at the colouring table. An awareness of sounds in words is developing. Staff encourage children to listen to the different letter sounds for example, during registration time they call each child's name giving emphasis to the initial letter. Children ask for the 'funny name' game, where staff have to think of a descriptive name for each child beginning with the same letter, they all find this extremely funny.

Children are beginning to develop their skills and interest in early mathematics. Older children count confidently and are able to match and sort using mathematical language such as more than, one more and one less to help them to solve problems. They take part in a wide range of planned and spontaneous activities to develop these skills such as stories, rhymes, games, puzzles and imaginative play. During registration time children take it in turn to count how many children are here. Staff introduce the concept of shape with 'shape of the week', children are encouraged to bring an item in to the setting that contains a triangle shape. A shape topic is covered for instance when looking at the circle shape children try foods that are circular, such as icing round cakes and tasting pizza. They engage in coin rubbing. Children look at opposites such as big and small as they glue different sized shapes on paper and listen to the story of the three bears. They use a good range of equipment during water play. They make their own boats and watch to see if they float. In the 'myself topic' they draw and measure their bodies. These activities promote children's ability to think and problem solve.

Children develop their exploration and investigation skills. They bring in snow when it has fallen to look and see how it feels and watch as it melts in the warm atmosphere. They explore how things work as they play with cameras, calculators and a till. They use a magnifying glass to look at and learn about mini beasts, holding worms, caterpillars and spiders. Tadpoles are bought in to see how they grow and change. They learn about the solar system through stories and art work. They are able to build and construct using different tools and techniques for example, using junk and different mediums like glue and tape to make rockets. They enjoy a range of exciting visits to the setting from a variety of people who talk about their interests and what they do. A music teacher visits with different instruments for children to look at and hear such as a guitar and violin, they are able to handle and play with them. Children enjoy organised trips to the farm and short trips within the local vicinity, to look at gardens and plant beans. They look at maps and talk about the places they have travelled to placing stickers on to a map to show where they have been. During the 'our pets' topic a wide variety of animals were bought in for the children to meet and learn about such as snakes, a lizard, guinea pig and an owl. Staff follow these visits with stories about that animal. Children learn about the cultures and beliefs of other people as they celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year, making lanterns and streamers and food tasting. This helps raise children's awareness of diversity.

Children have good opportunities to develop physical skills as they use equipment in the indoor play area. They practise their climbing skills on the small climbing frame and learn to balance on the balancing beams. They negotiate space and obstacles well as they use bikes, trolleys and pushchairs. A sports day is organised where they are challenged to compete in a variety of races. They learn how exercise has a positive effect on our body and health. Children engage in imaginative role play activities in the well-resourced role play area and join in enthusiastically with their favourite songs and action rhymes. Role play varies and encompasses a variety of themes such as opticians and travel agent. A staff member bought in her vehicle that is similar to 'Dora the explorer's van'. Children got on and were able to re-enact the programme they enjoy watching on the television.

Overall, children make good progress in their learning and achieve well given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are valued and included. When they arrive at the setting they are greeted warmly by staff and this positive interaction continues throughout the session. Staff demonstrate a

friendly, caring manner and offer comfort and affection when appropriate, as a result children settle quickly to an activity of their choice. All staff wear a t-shirt with the playgroup logo on and name badges, these help them to be easily identified. Photographs of the children are displayed on the walls or placed in albums, these along with displays of their art work add to their sense of belonging. Staff take time to talk with parents and gain an understanding of each child and their family. Consequently they have good relationships with the children they work with and know them well. Information is gathered at the time of placement and this ensures their needs are identified and met. There are no children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the setting, however, there are appropriate procedures in place to support and ensure inclusion.

Children are becoming increasingly aware of wider society as they access a good range of resources and activities that reflect diversity and the wider community. They enjoy celebrating Diwali and Chinese New Year where they make decorations, dress up and try food tasting. They discuss and see equality through play and this helps increase their understanding of the needs of others. Children learn about responsible behaviour and are aware of what is expected of them. Staff set clear boundaries and offer good explanation. They deal with behaviour in a calm and consistent manner, encouraging self-discipline and a respect for others. Praise and encouragement are given for positive behaviour such as star stickers and reward charts. As a result children behave well at the playgroup and enjoy the time they spend there. Effective communication with parents ensures difficult behaviour is shared, this results in a consistent approach where further advice and support can be sought if required. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with parents. This ensures children receive consistent and appropriate care. Parents are encouraged to approach staff at any time to share information, however children are not assigned a 'key worker'. They are informed about how they may complain about any aspect of the service and staff are aware of their duty to log complaints. A written policy is prominently displayed, though some of the details need to be updated. Parents have a parent representative who is able to act on their behalf, should they wish, to voice their ideas, comments or concerns.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. On entry parents receive information about the education programme through a written handbook. This contains details about the foundation stage and the six areas of learning. Posters are displayed within play areas to describe how and what children learn when participating in different types of play and activities. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's education and learning. Newsletters are sent out each term to inform them of forthcoming events and activities. Sheets are also sent home that cover what the children will be learning on a weekly basis for example, the letter, shape, number and colour of the week. Parents are asked to help their child find and bring in an item from home for 'show and tell'. Children can also loan books and encouragement is given to read these at home with their parents. Staff inform parents about their child's achievement during daily discussion and through taking work home. Parents are made aware of the assessment procedure and are invited to attend a parents' evening where they can view their child's profile and work. Staff discuss their child's progress and what they are working towards, any views expressed by parent's are included in the profile. Parents also receive a report when their child leaves the setting. Parents are very complimentary about the care and education provided and the good progress their children are making.

Staff seek information from parents about their child's individual needs at the start of placement, however what they know about their child's development is not recorded or used to enable

staff to quickly identify the child's next steps in learning. This would ensure parents are fully involved from the onset in sharing and contributing towards their child's progress and development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting is well organised and provides a stimulating environment. Staff have a high regard for the well-being of children. They are attentive to their needs and demonstrate a caring nature, giving comfort when needed and one to one support. As a result children are happy and enjoy their time at the group. Staff complete vetting procedures when recruited. However, these need to be more robust to fully ensure suitability of staff when they commence and continue this on an ongoing basis. New staff are inducted appropriately and staff appraisals are used to identify any training needs. An effective system is in place to ensure staff's professional development and to explore practice issues. All staff hold a child care qualification and are committed to further developing their knowledge and understanding through accessing regular training events. Staff deployment is managed well, to ensure children are fully supported throughout the session. The setting operate with a high level of adult to child ratio and this has a positive impact on children's care, learning and play. All relevant documents are in place, although some need to be updated to ensure they contain relevant detail and reflect changes in legislation.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The supervisor has a clear focus on meeting the needs of all children who attend, providing the best quality service both in terms of care and education. Staff are well managed with good systems in place to provide direction, guidance and support. Good communication exists between staff. Meetings are held regularly to discuss how all areas of the curriculum are to be covered and to identify any gaps in children's learning and ensure they are making steady progress. Value is given to ideas contributed by individual staff and these are incorporated into planning. This results in effective quality of teaching. The supervisor and staff work closely with the Local Authority Early Years worker to assess and monitor the setting's strengths and weaknesses. Action plans are produced to identify areas for development and how these will be achieved. The leader and staff are motivated to provide good quality education for all children.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the playgroup were asked to ensure there is always at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate on the premises at any one time. Staff have attended training in paediatric and emergency first aid and there are currently two staff who hold certificates. This means children's needs can be met in the event of an accident. They were asked to review the organisation of large group activities to ensure the needs of all children are met. More small group work and one to one sessions have been introduced and plans have been further developed to show how activities should be adapted or extended. This ensures all children are suitably challenged.

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):

- ensure vetting and recruitment procedures are rigorous and adults looking after children are suitable to do so
- identify a key worker for 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):

- continue to improve how parents' knowledge of their child's development is sought at the onset of placement and complete a baseline assessment.

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