

Leverstock Green Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	129361
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Inspector	Jane Mount
Setting Address	Village Hall, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP3 8QG
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Registered person	The Trustee's of Leverstock Green Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Leverstock Green Playgroup opened in 1974 and operates from the Village Hall, Leverstock Green, Hertfordshire. Facilities used include a new base room situated off the large hall which has its own toilets, kitchen and storage facilities. A new fully secure outside play area is also available for outdoor play. The playgroup serves the local and wider community.

There are currently 58 children on roll including 16 children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the setting is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens Monday to Friday, term time only. Morning sessions are from 09:15 until 12:15. Afternoon sessions are from 13:00 to 14:30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays only. A lunch club operates from 12:15 to 13:00.

Leverstock Green Playgroup employs nine staff. Six of the staff have appropriate early years childcare qualifications with other staff currently undertaking childcare qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. At snack time they have a varied selection of healthy foods such as apples, bananas, pears, pitta bread, rice cakes and breadsticks. Children's individual dietary needs are met well with effective recording procedures in place so all staff are fully aware of any special dietary requirements a child may have. Consequently, children's health is safeguarded. Snack time is used as a time for sharing and social interaction and to encourage good table manners. Children are beginning to learn about healthy eating. For example, children sit in small groups with their peers and staff and enjoy talking about the flavour and texture of the food they are eating. Children attending the lunch club discuss the contents of their packed lunches and what is nutritious and good for them to eat. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy packed lunches for their children. For example, a list of healthy choices for children's lunch boxes is displayed for parents to give them ideas of what to provide. Water is always available to drink and at snack time milk is also available. Children have opportunities to practise their independence skills such as at snack time when they confidently pour their own drinks or help to give out the food.

Children's health is protected because staff implement the setting's health and hygiene policies and procedures. There are clear recording procedures in place for accidents and when administering medication. Children's health is safeguarded with highly effective procedures in place for children who may require emergency medical treatment such as an epi-pen. For example, epi-pens are safely stored in individual boxes with the child's name and their photograph on the front. Boxes are kept where they are accessible in an emergency and staff are fully aware of the correct procedures to follow. Children's health is promoted and the risk of cross-infection is minimised. For example, staff ensure they wash their hands before preparing or handling any food and tables are thoroughly cleaned at snack time and at the lunch club. Children are learning how to stay healthy. Staff support and help children gain a clear understanding of good hygiene practices. For example, they help children to wipe their noses and to dispose of tissues appropriately and children are reminded to cover their mouths when they cough. Also, children are reminded to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and staff usually explain the reason for doing this. All children know they must wash their hands thoroughly before snack time and lunch club and are praised by staff for doing so.

Children participate in a range of activities which contributes to their physical health and fitness within the daily routine. They show enjoyment when playing outside each day and benefit from the fresh air such as when chasing and catching bubbles. Their physical development is promoted as they show expertise as they ride on the bikes and skilfully negotiate around obstacles while pushing buggies. They have opportunities to participate in music and movement sessions and are learning that physical exercise can be fun. Children are able to rest or be more active according to their needs. For example, in the book area carpet and seating is available for children who wish to sit quietly and children can be regularly seen sitting and looking at books together.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have choice in an environment kept safe but where they are able to explore with safe limits set. Staff have a good knowledge of health and safety procedures and positive steps are

taken to promote safety and to keep children safe. For example, there are highly effective security systems in place and supervising entry to the playgroup is managed well by staff with a buzzer system in place. This ensures children cannot leave unsupervised and no unauthorised person can gain access. Consequently, children remain safe. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because staff are vigilant and any potential risks are generally identified and addressed through the completion of risk assessments. Clear and effective emergency evacuation procedures are in place which all staff are fully aware of and know how to implement.

Children have opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe with staff explaining safe practices to them. For example, explaining to a group of children why building a very high tower with large wooden bricks may be dangerous as the bricks may fall and hurt someone. Also, when preparing to go outside to play staff talk about the safety procedures to follow. Children know they must line up and wait to be counted before holding onto the wall to walk to the outside play area. When asked children know it is so they stay safe and do not get lost or hurt.

Children have access to a range of safe and developmentally appropriate resources and equipment to promote their learning and development. The playgroup has been organised to encourage children to independently access most resources. For example, furniture is at child height with low-level storage units to encourage them to explore resources easily. Resources are well maintained and regularly checked by staff to ensure they are clean and safe and have no broken or missing pieces. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a secure knowledge of child protection and give priority to children's safety and welfare. There is an informative child protection policy in place which all staff are aware of and know how to implement. Children are protected from harm and neglect because staff are familiar with recording and reporting procedures if they did have a concern. There is a designated person responsible for child protection who supports and guides the staff team. Consequently, children remain safe from harm and are not at risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Younger children's learning is promoted because the staff have a secure knowledge of child development and of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff use the framework to plan and organise play experiences for children under three years which are developmentally appropriate. Keyworkers regularly observe and assess children to see how they are progressing. A review is completed when a child reaches the age of three years when they move on to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Assessment records are linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and overall show how children are progressing and what their next stages of learning are. Assessment records generally inform future planning and this ensures planned activities are developmentally appropriate for the children who attend and helps them to make progress. An effective keyworker system is in place with staff knowing their key children and their families well. Subsequently, children's individual needs are met well and they develop confidence and self-esteem. Staff work in close partnership with parents which results in them being able to effectively support children in their play.

Younger children happily separate from their parents and carers at the beginning of the session; they are motivated in their play and enthusiastically explore the environment. They are able to participate in a varied range of activities which provide a balance of free play and more structured play opportunities within the daily routine. Children's independence is encouraged as they are able to move around freely and safely and make independent choices in their play.

Children have regular opportunities to experience creative play such as paint, water, playdough and other mediums. For example, children expertly roll and cut play dough making different patterns and shapes and talk with their friends about what they are doing. Children actively engage in using their imaginations and enjoy playing in the home corner and making 'lunch' while doing the 'ironing' and 'washing-up' all at the same time. Children's communication skills are supported well by staff as they listen and respond to children's questions such as when looking at books together.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Overall, staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage which ensures that children take part in activities that enable them to make progress in their learning. Children are motivated in their play and are making generally good progress in their learning. They are encouraged to persist in tasks with appropriate support and staff are skilled at asking open-ended questions that encourage children to think. Staff build trusting relationships with children. They talk about safety and behaviour within routines and children's behaviour is managed in a positive manner which helps to promote children's self-esteem.

Curriculum planning includes long, medium and short term plans and are linked to the six areas of learning. Short term plans have generally clear learning intentions including how activities will be adapted for children who learn at different rates and are usually linked to the stepping stones. Currently, not all staff actively participate in planning the curriculum and are therefore not developing their knowledge of how to implement an effective Foundation Stage curriculum. Consequently, this may potentially hinder children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff observe and assess children to identify their achievements, any learning difficulties and progress over time. Older children's assessment records are informative and are linked to the six areas of learning and the stepping stones. The information gained from children's assessments is generally used to inform future planning.

Children arrive happy and quickly settle and engage in activities with friends and staff. Children are aware of behavioural expectations such as taking turns and sharing when playing or listening when someone else is talking at circle time. Children show great independence skills through being able to access most of the environment. For example, going to the toilet on their own or putting on their apron for an art activity. Children try hard to put on their coats and shoes when going outside to play and are praised by staff for doing so which develops children's self-esteem and sense of well-being. Children have opportunities to experience music, imaginative play and experience various materials and media on a daily basis. Children can freely access drawing and writing materials and regularly enjoy art and craft activities such as painting, sticking and cutting out. They are keen to use their imaginations. For example, they make pancakes with playdough which they put in the home corner oven to 'cook'. When outside they 'mend' the wheels on the cars. Mathematical concepts are reinforced through books, singing and counting during the daily routine. For example, counting how many children are present when taking the register at story time. Children are able to explore mathematical concepts such as volume and quantity such as when playing with water and sand. Staff encourage the use of mathematical language such as when playing with the bricks they talk about bigger, smaller, short and tall. Children talk about shapes and when asked can confidently find a circle or a triangle or a square shape.

Children listen and respond with enjoyment when listening to stories, songs and rhymes. They understand that print carries meaning and are becoming familiar with the written word such

as labelled toy boxes. There are some opportunities to use name cards such as at snack time and children find their names to put on their coat pegs at the beginning of the session. Children have some opportunities to link sounds to letters. Children's physical skills are fostered with regular opportunities to exercise incorporated within the daily routine. Children are able to move with confidence and control as they play outside. They skilfully negotiate around obstacles while pushing buggies and riding bikes. They demonstrate balance as they step from one brick to the next and develop co-ordination as they catch and burst bubbles. Children have some opportunities to climb. Children have access to resources that develop their knowledge and understanding of technology and the world. They are confident when using the computer and show good control when using the mouse. In the home corner they confidently use a camera to take photographs and can use a tape player to listen to story tapes. Children learn about past and present through talking about each other's families and the people they know. Children develop a sense of place through going for nature walks or visiting the local shops.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children play well together and have an excellent awareness of right and wrong. Children are learning to manage their behaviour through working and playing in an environment that sets clear boundaries. Behaviour is dealt with in positive ways with staff talking with children about helping each other in their play, sharing, taking turns and behaving considerately towards others. For example, staff praise a child who helps another to find their shoes when getting ready to go outside to play. Staff explain the implications negative behaviour can have on others and how some behaviours may be inappropriate. For example, staff sensitively explain to a child that it is not a good idea to throw the toy because it may hit someone and hurt them or the toy may be broken. They talk about feelings and children learn how to cope with their feelings. Children are taught to be polite to others and staff are excellent role models. Children can be regularly heard saying 'please' and 'thank you'. Staff have highly effective systems in place to provide appropriate care and support to children who have English as an additional language. They work in close partnership with parents to ensure children's individual needs are met. Excellent strategies are in place for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their families. The setting's special needs co-ordinator is proactive in ensuring that the appropriate action is taken when a child is identified with, or admitted with, a particular need. Children are treated with equal concern and all children have equal access to resources and activities. Staff ensure they are fully aware of, and able to meet, the specific needs a child may have through close discussion with parents and then any agencies that may be appropriate. All children are highly valued and fully included and their families supported. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children gain a well-developed respect for others and their beliefs, cultures and traditions. Their awareness of diversity is promoted through the varied range of resources and stimulating activities they take part in. This includes regular opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them. Children have exciting opportunities to learn about and appreciate the customs and cultures of others through learning about some of the festivals. For example, children recently enjoyed learning about Divali. They listened and danced to Indian music and delighted in making pictures of Rangoli patterns. Children develop positive attitudes to others as they are able to select from resources which reflect diversity such as role play clothes and play food. Displays and posters throughout the pre-school reflect positive images and help children become aware of the wider world. Children have regular opportunities to learn about the local community. For example, the local police officer makes regular visits to

the playgroup. Children enjoy outings into the local community such as going to the local shops to buy fruit for snack time or an Autumn nature walk to observe the changes to the seasons.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Relationships between staff and parents and carers is excellent which significantly contributes to children's well-being, care and learning. A clear settling-in programme ensures children settle well and become secure in their surroundings. Children's individual needs are very effectively met as staff obtain information from parents prior to their child starting in the playgroup. Information is then exchanged on a daily basis between parents and staff to ensure children receive appropriate care and support. A keyworker system is used and priority is given to ensure parents are fully aware of who their child's keyworker is. Informative notice boards, newsletters and comprehensive policies and procedures are also used to keep parents fully informed about the provision. Information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage are shared with parents. Consequently, parents are fully informed and able to actively help their children make progress in their learning. Parents are welcomed into the setting and children's achievements are verbally shared on a daily basis. More formal parents' meetings are also arranged as required and are another way of sharing children's development and progress. Parent questionnaires are used as a way of monitoring the quality of care and education provided and feedback from parents has been positive. A suggestion box is also available for parents to make comments. Parents spoken to at inspection praised the playgroup. They felt the environment is welcoming and the staff are very friendly and helpful. Parents felt fully informed of the progress their children are making and were very happy with the type of care and education their children receive.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Recruitment procedures ensure children are cared for by staff who have the relevant qualifications and experience to do their jobs well. Children are safeguarded because appropriate checks are completed on all staff and information is effectively recorded. Any persons such as visitors who have not been vetted would not have unsupervised access to children and all staff are fully aware of this. Children are cared for by staff who have a secure knowledge of child development and a very high percentage of staff hold an early years childcare qualification. The staff are well informed and keep up to date with current child care practices through regular staff training. Generally clear induction systems ensure that staff are fully informed of the setting's policies and procedures and overall these are implemented well. All required documentation for the efficient and safe management of the setting is in place. Registers are maintained and accurately record children's attendance and there are good procedures in place for recording visitors. However, systems for recording staff attendance are not so effective and do not clearly show staff attendance throughout the day. Consequently, in an emergency children's welfare is potentially not fully protected.

The leadership and management is good. Staff are guided by the effective leadership of the manager who has a clear vision for the provision. For example, the playgroup has recently undergone major changes to its premises which involved moving to a new room within the village hall with its own associated facilities including a small kitchen and toilets. Also, a new outside play area is near completion and will further improve outcomes for children. The manager has overseen the move and transition into the new rooms to ensure minimal disruption to staff, children and their families. Consequently, children's welfare, care and learning are promoted.

The manager is committed to ensuring a stimulating and nurturing environment is provided for the children who attend the playgroup. She leads by example and is a positive role model. She works in close partnership with the deputy and they value their staff team and know and utilise their skills well. Children are cared for by staff who are supportive of each other and work well together as a team. They clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and implement them well. Staff are supported well, such as through staff meetings. The information gained from staff meetings is used as a way of monitoring and then evaluating the quality of care and education provided within the setting. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting received a good judgement with one recommendation which was to maintain and evaluate records for fire drills. Children are protected and remain safe because the setting has reviewed their emergency fire evacuation procedures. For example, fire drills are practised on a regular basis to ensure all children and staff are familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures. Also, records are maintained and evaluated of all fire drills to ensure they are effective.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting received a very good judgement with one point for consideration which was to develop strategies to support children with English as an additional language. Children and families who are learning to speak English as an additional language are well supported by the setting. They work in close partnership with parents and implement effective strategies to ensure children's individual needs are met.

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):

- review and improve registration systems to ensure staff attendance is clear and accurate.

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):

- further increase staff knowledge and understanding of how to effectively implement the Foundation Stage curriculum through ensuring all staff are actively involved in the planning of 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