

The Park Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206160
Inspection date	06 February 2008
Inspector	Geraldine Barford
Setting Address	Chaddesden Memorial Hall, Chaddesden Lane, Chaddesden, Derby, Derbyshire, DE21 6LN
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Registered person	Theresa Hartwright
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?

The Park Play group opened in 1999. It operates from the large playroom and the story room in the Memorial Hall, in the village of Chaddesden, near the city of Derby.

The playgroup serves the local and surrounding area.

There is a secure enclosed outdoor play area and the children are taken occasionally to the local park for relevant activities.

The playgroup opens five days a week during school term only. Sessions are from 09.30 until 12.00 and also on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12.30 until 15.00.

There are currently 37 children from two years to four years on roll. This includes five children in receipt of funding for early education. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and none who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs seven part time staff. Over half the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from the local authority. The playgroup is owned by an informal partnership, made up of two early years qualified members of staff.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is generally promoted because staff follow satisfactory hygiene procedures, such as cleaning the tables before snack time and ensuring food preparation areas in the kitchen are clean. Access to appropriate toilet facilities are available and children usually wash their hands after using the toilet and before snack. However, sometimes a bowl of water and a towel are provided in the main play room for hand washing after messy play and children do not always go and wash their hands properly with soap before accessing their snack. This means that there is a potential risk of the spread of infection and therefore children are not completely protected.

Children are provided with a selection of nutritious snacks which meet their individual dietary needs, such as apples, raisins, bananas and pears, which they are able to access throughout the first half of the session. There is a choice of milk or water to drink at snack time and water is available at all times to ensure that children do not become thirsty.

Staff follow appropriate procedures if the children feel ill or have an accident and satisfactory care is provided. Named first aiders are available at each session, a well stocked first aid box is easily accessible and staff are aware of the correct procedures for administering medication. In addition, permission is obtained from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and information is gathered from parents about individual children's health care needs. Accidents are generally recorded appropriately, however some staff do not always include sufficient detail and therefore children may not be totally safeguarded.

Children are developing a positive attitude to physical exercise and their physical skills are being developed appropriately. Most days, they have access to the outdoor area where they run around, push prams and use ride-on toys and other appropriate equipment. In bad weather staff set up apparatus indoors. Each day children enthusiastically take part in dance activities and action songs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment where staff take positive steps to minimise risks, for example, they monitor children's arrival and departure and ensure that the entrance to the provision is kept secure to prevent unauthorised access. In addition the steps up to a stage in the main play room, and the kitchen area are made inaccessible. Fire safety precautions including a fire blanket, smoke detectors and extinguishers are in place and staff practise emergency evacuations with the children to ensure they know what to do in the event of a fire.

Staff create a bright and stimulating environment. The building is made welcoming with displays on the walls of children's own artwork which they proudly point to, and a rug and cushions set out in the room where children meet for registration. The layout of the playrooms provides children with space to move around freely and safely and encourages their independence, for example children confidently access the toilet and hand washing facilities. Staff offer support and encouragement if children struggle with clothing and praise them for their efforts. Children are able to self-select from a broad range of toys and equipment which meet safety standards and are well-maintained.

Children develop a good understanding of safety rules, for example they understand that toys must be tidied away so that nobody will fall over them, and that bags and coats must be hung up or put on the trolley. Their welfare is safeguarded because there is a designated member of staff with child protection training and all staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in protecting children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Most children arrive happy and settle well, or are sensitively supported by staff to do so, in the welcoming environment. Children form good relationships with each other, they eagerly greet their friends as they arrive and join in with activities until registration. Children are confident and can play well on their own or with others. Staff are supportive and caring towards the children and take time to listen to them, this helps children develop a sense of self worth as they know staff value their contributions. The organisation of activities and routines of the session encourage children to initiate their own play and follow their own interests, as they freely choose to spend their time engaged in activities that interest and motivate them, for example discussing how a variety of textured materials feel when using them to make a picture.

The setting has successfully developed the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework in their practice with this age group. There is a key worker system in place and all staff are very sensitive and aware of the needs of younger children. They use an effective system to record children's achievement and progression. The framework is well reflected in their planning and staff informally adapt activities to ensure younger children are able to participate and make progress. For example they soften dough so that it is easier to roll out and they share the weight of the jug when children pour milk into the pancake mixture which enables younger children to feel self assured and supported. Children understand the routines of the group and anticipate when it is time to go all together into the other play room, equally staff effectively split them into groups at other times to ensure everyone is able to join in and contribute.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play ensures children are motivated and engaged in a broad range of developmentally appropriate activities. Staff use their good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn to provide a stimulating environment which reflects all children's background and the wider community. Staff use an effective range of teaching methods to motivate children so they are keen to learn and make progress, and share the children's delight in their achievements. They use successful strategies to engage and interest children, for example, at story time splitting the children into two groups and using lively music and action songs to encourage their interest and participation. Staff constantly join in with children's play to extend their learning and they informally adapt activities to provide children with realistic challenge, for example they alter

the number of animals in calculation activities and they help children to select the most appropriate mark making implements for their individual level of development.

Planning is written around topics and is balanced across the six areas of learning and is linked to appropriate stepping stones. Assessment is based upon meaningful observations recorded in children's records of assessment and staff generally record children's next steps in learning and incorporate them into future planning. However, records are not always consistently completed and therefore opportunities for children's further development may be missed. Staff manage children's behaviour effectively and provide them with good strategies to help them learn to manage their own behaviour.

Children enjoy their time at the setting. They have a positive attitude to learning and become confident and self-assured in their play, negotiating and interacting well with their peers to share ideas and experiences. They develop their self-esteem and take great pride in their achievements, for example, actively seeking out staff to show them what they have done. Children play together well, cooperating and offering their own suggestions when parking cars in the multi storey car park or serving pretend Chinese food in the role play area.

Most children confidently recognise their own name and they are developing good pencil control, for example when attempting to write their names to label their own pictures and they become engrossed in stories read with lots of enthusiasm and expression by staff. Skilful questioning and discussion of the story provides children with additional opportunities to extend their speaking and listening abilities. They use mathematical language during their play when measuring the sausages they have made from dough or when comparing the number of cars they have and they practise their counting abilities during number rhymes and songs. Children competently display their skills when using the pretend telephone in the role play 'Chinese restaurant', and operate everyday technology in their play when they use battery operated toys.

Children take part in activities to learn about living things; they show curiosity when observing snails and other creatures in the environment, when feeding the goldfish and when growing cress or sunflowers. They make good use of their imagination in planned and spontaneous role play situations. They explore their creativity while experimenting with a wide range of media and materials when making junk models. Overall, children make good progress in their learning and achieve well during their time at the setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the setting. Staff value their individual personalities and ensure all children are able to play with toys and equipment which meet their individual needs, so they can become confident and independent. The displays of children's work, and the frequent recognition of their achievements helps them to develop a good sense of belonging. The provision has effective arrangements in place to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff work in partnership with parents and other professionals, for example the speech therapist, to ensure children's specific needs are met.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are learning right from wrong and show concern for others through the use of effective strategies, for example praising children's helpfulness and kindness to others. Children are learning to manage their own behaviour, such as by turn taking and sharing resources. They understand the rules of the

group and can explain them to others, for example 'you must put your bowl and cup away after snack'. Children have meaningful opportunities to learn about the wider world and other cultures. They take part in festivals and activities such as Chinese New Year, an Easter Bonnet Parade and Caribbean dancing and block painting.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. All the required documentation and consents are in place to ensure children are looked after according to their parents' wishes. Parents are invited to view the group's policies and procedures to inform them about the running of the group and they receive a booklet which offers an overview and information about the curriculum frameworks followed. Children benefit from the good relationships fostered with parents. Information is exchanged verbally on a daily basis to ensure children's changing needs are met and to provide continuity of care. Although parents are not at present given ideas of how they can reinforce learning at home, some posters are used to invite parents to contribute to topics, for example by sending in family photographs or pictures of healthy foods. Parents are invited to formally discuss their children's progress twice a year and written reports are produced when children leave the setting. Parents are very complimentary about the care and education provided and the good progress made by their children. They have very friendly relationships with the staff and are never in a hurry to leave. The group make parents aware how they can make a complaint and are aware of their duty to log complaints, should they ever receive any.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are relaxed and happy in the setting. They are safeguarded as recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well-protected and cared for by staff who have very good knowledge and understanding of child development. The well-organised environment and effective staff deployment enhances children's enjoyment and achievement. Sessions are well-organised with clear routines which help children settle and become confident. Staff work together as an effective team to support children's care, learning and play.

Operational policies and procedures are generally effective and evident within practice; they promote children's good health, safety and ability to make a positive contribution. The plan is organised and cohesive, clearly detailing the running of the provision and is readily available to parents. The required documentation is in place to promote the welfare of children attending.

The leadership and management is good. The strong leadership provided by senior staff has built a dedicated team who are committed to self evaluation and improving the quality of care and the provision of nursery education. Regular discussions and staff meetings take place to monitor and evaluate the provision and identify areas for improvement. Staff appraisals are conducted regularly to identify individuals strengths and weaknesses and areas for professional development. These are reflected upon and action is taken to maintain staff motivation and ensure they have opportunities to further develop in areas of specific interest. The group work closely with other professionals and evidently act upon any advice given.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last care inspection the setting was asked to update the operational plan; to ensure the range of activities and play opportunities were sufficient, and met the needs of all children; to ensure accident and incident records contained sufficient information and were signed by

parents. There is now a comprehensive operational plan which includes all current requirements and policies and procedures which are shared with parents. Revised planning has ensured that a wider range of activities and opportunities are available to promote children's overall development and needs. Accident and incident records now generally contain sufficient information but the accident records are not always consistently completed and so there is a further recommendation at this inspection.

At the last education inspection the group were given recommendations around; using information gathered from monitoring and evaluations of children's learning, to aid the planning of activities to further children's development; to continue with the development of the new planning system, to offer a balanced curriculum, which has clear learning intentions of what children are intended to learn; to provide an environment that reflects the importance of language. These issues have all been well addressed and this positively impacts upon children's learning.

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 positive steps are taken to prevent the risk of infection
- ensure that accident records are consistently maintained by all staff

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):

- consistently complete assessment sheets so that the next steps for all children's development are made clear
- further develop methods of sharing children's learning with parents.

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