

Fowlmere Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 221791 |
| Inspection date | 25 January 2008 |
| Inspector | Kerry Freshwater |
| Setting Address | Fowlmere URC Chapel Hall, Chapel Lane, Fowlmere, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, SG8 7RX |
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| Registered person | The Trustees of Fowlmere 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Fowlmere play group opened in 1977 and operates from the chapel hall in the village of Fowlmere in Cambridgeshire. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday except Wednesdays from 09.30 to 12.00 for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 24 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area.

The nursery employs three staff. Two of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a clean, hygienic environment where regular cleaning routines are in place to prevent the spread of infection. For example, antibacterial cleaners are used to wipe down tables before snack and the premises is checked and cleaned daily. Effective procedures and practices are in place to promote children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Staff obtain all necessary information and consents from parents relating to children's health and diet to ensure appropriate care can be given. Staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications. Children are excluded if they are unwell or suffering from a contagious illness so that others can be protected from infection.

Children are learning the importance of good health and hygiene as they follow daily routines, which include washing their hands regularly using liquid soap and paper towels. Staff remind children when this has been forgotten and children are sent back to the bathroom to ensure their hands are clean. However, children are not encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene by freely accessing tissues, using them independently and disposing of them appropriately. Children learn about healthy living through discussion and topic work. They talk about healthy foods and the need to eat their food to make them full of energy to play outside. They guess the vegetable from the feely bag and look at the '5-a-day' poster. Children enjoy a range of healthy snack foods, such as fruit, vegetables and breadsticks and regular drinks are available.

Children enjoy a broad variety of daily activities which enable them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. They confidently peddle tricycles, manoeuvre other wheeled toys, play ball games, shake streamers and roll hoops. Indoors children complete puzzles, manipulate play dough and build with various construction equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a warm, welcoming environment with safe and comfortable areas where they can play and rest. They have easy and safe access to a wide range of quality resources which are stimulating and suitable for their stage of development. They are enthusiastic in their play and enjoy freely selecting from the range of equipment available. Children benefit from a good range of safety measures. For example, risk assessments are carried out to the indoor and outdoor areas, staff ensure that the kitchen gate is kept closed and hot drinks remain in the kitchen. The premises are secure and the front gate is kept closed when children play outside. Fire safety equipment is easily accessible, fire drills are carried out twice per term and are recorded appropriately.

Children quickly learn to keep themselves safe through activities, discussion and gentle guidance. They know how to play safely indoors and out, learning not to run indoors so that they do not fall over and picking up excess toys to prevent any accidents. Through topic work staff talk to children about being safe around fireworks and introduce the idea of road safety which children are reminded of on local outings.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. Some staff members have attended child protection training and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. A detailed policy

and both the required government and local authority guidance is in place should any concerns arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in stimulating activities throughout the session. They are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other. They choose independently and are gaining in confidence, asking questions and chatting with staff and visitors. They play happily together and are learning to take turns and respond to others as they participate in activities. Children's achievements are greatly improved by staff's awareness of their development. They become confident communicators as they share ideas in their play, for instance as they build with various construction materials, play with the farm and enjoy their pretend play in the home corner. Children play very well together and negotiate their roles as they make and serve imaginary meals. Singing and musical activities improve their communication skills. Children make connections in their learning as they freely explore the textures of sand, water, paint and corn flour. Regular use of a wide range of creative materials, including paint, collage and drawing resources encourages children to express their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. They paint freely, create firework pictures using powder paint, make jack-in-the-boxes, print with vegetables and draw with chalks. Children enjoy cookery activities as part of topics and themes. For example, they make apple cake for Harvest, vegetable soup and look at different shapes as they make pizzas using triangles of cheese, square ham and circles of pepperoni. Children acquire new experiences and knowledge and develop their understanding of the natural environment through interesting activities. For example, they enjoy a spring walk and a conker hunt, they collect leaves, twigs and other natural items, they plant and grow potatoes and talk about the natural changes through the seasons.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well, supported by the staff team's strong commitment to their early learning. Staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage which enables them to support children's learning. Planning systems are detailed and all areas of learning are well covered. Staff identify assessment opportunities and look at ways that children can be extended and supported depending on their needs and abilities. Ongoing observations are used to plan the next steps for children's learning and ensure that children's learning is continually challenged. Activities are evaluated sporadically enabling staff to adapt activities according to children's needs and ensure that children are fully extended. Staff are planning to develop this area further. Children's achievements are clearly linked to the stepping stones and included in future planning to ensure all children are given the support and guidance that they need.

Children are engaged and motivated by a wide range of stimulating, practical activities. They access a variety of good quality resources, which support their learning across the Foundation Stage. Children are enthusiastic, keen to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. Their independence skills are generally promoted as they put on their coats and hats, attempt to fasten zips and buttons, hang up their coats after outside play, use the toilet and wash their hands independently. However, there are few opportunities for children to develop independence further at snack time, such as, by accessing their own food, pouring drinks or helping with snack preparation. Children learn to share and take turns as they play games and enjoy different toys together. They confidently contribute their ideas and happily talk about their home experiences. Children listen to stories with interest and enthusiasm,

participating well in group discussions. For example, as they are told the 'Owl babies' story and excitedly participate in the rhyming book, 'Don't put your finger in the jelly, Nelly'. Children use marks readily to represent their ideas as they paint, write and draw. They all have opportunities to write their own names or letters on their work, write their own Christmas cards and envelopes and draw around letter stencils. This increases their opportunities to develop their early writing skills. Children's pre-reading skills are supported as they find their name cards to self-register and hang up their coats, create their initial letters in pulses and beans, look at sound cards and talk about different letter sounds as they play 'bubble trouble' on the computer.

Children are highly imaginative. They enjoy role play games using dressing-up clothes and the other resources that make up each new role play area. For example, the home corner, post office, vets and hairdressers. Children develop their creative skills through a range of activities. They mix autumn colours for a seasonal theme and explore colour as they look through coloured plastic sheets to compare the different colours. They enjoy painting, printing and creating colourful collage pictures using a range of different materials. They participate enthusiastically in action songs and rhymes, such as, 'Up the hill and down the hill' and 'One finger, one thumb'. They enjoy exploring sound as they play instruments, play the sound game to beat or stop when asked and learn to play their instruments fast and slow. Children are inquisitive and enjoy exploring different textures such as sand, water and play dough. Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them as they learn about their surroundings and other people. For example, they enjoy a walk around the village, take pictures of local signs and events, produce their own village maps, create their versions of stained glass windows and a model of the chapel using different boxes and tubes. Children develop an understanding of different cultures and celebrate the festivals of others. For example, as they find out about the Diwali story, they listen to the story of Rama and Sita and then re-tell the story using props, masks and puppets. Children develop their understanding of the local and natural environment as they go for walks around the outside area. They collect conkers, leaves and twigs which they use for weighing, sorting and measuring. Children become familiar with simple technology as they program the Beebot robot to move across a grid, operate the CD player, digital camera and learn to use the computer.

Children respond well to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. They become confident with number as they count enthusiastically from one to 10, they count the number of scoops needed to fill a container with sand, they count and compare sizes of conkers, cones and pasta. They sing number rhymes, such as '5 current buns' and calculate how many are left. Children learn to recognise different shapes as they play shape games and complete pictures with the Geometrix equipment. Children learn about weights and measures as they sort and order objects by weight, height and length. They begin to recognise different numbers as they complete the dragon puzzle matching numbers up to 20. They play dominos, use calculators, rulers and compare different denomination coins in the play shop. Children gain opportunities to develop their physical skills through a wide range of activities and use a variety of equipment. They participate in music and movement sessions, ride bikes and other wheeled toys, play the traffic lights and footprint games and play with hoops and balls. Indoors they confidently cut with scissors, construct with different resources, thread beads and cotton reels. This develops their confidence and abilities to coordinate their bodies.

Staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help them achieve their full potential. They use appropriate systems to observe, monitor

and record children's achievements and to plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are all warmly welcomed into the setting and are highly valued as individuals. They develop a strong sense of belonging and learn about their own and other's needs, through topics and interaction from the staff. Purposeful resources reflect the world and local community and give children a clear understanding about different cultures and the lives of those around us. They begin to appreciate the customs and cultures of others as they learn about different festivals and celebrations. For example, children make Diwali cards, create patterns and decorate their hands. Children find out about different countries through topics, they make flags and the Eiffel tower, and sing French songs for Bastille day, they look at posters of different countries and select flags to make. Children make regular visits to the nearby school and find out about the local area.

Children's behaviour is very good. They play very well together and clearly enjoy each other's company. They are encouraged to take turns and share resources with their friends. Children are polite and are encouraged to use 'please' and 'thank you'. Staff manage children well and have high expectations for their behaviour. They provide good role models, by showing the children respect, talking calmly and quietly to them at all times and this is reflected in the calm atmosphere generated within the sessions. Children are given the opportunity to discuss and resolve issues amongst themselves but staff are close at hand to intervene, where necessary. Children are therefore developing good social skills and clearly understand what is required of them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting and informal daily feedback is provided to keep them informed of their children's progress. Staff form good relationships with parents and ensure that they work together to meet children's individual needs. New parents receive an informative prospectus, which tells them about the setting and some information relating to the curriculum. Further information is provided via the notice board and regular newsletters which notify parents of topics and daily routines. However, information relating to the Foundation Stage is not sufficient in detail to give parents a clear understanding about what and how children are learning as they progress through the stepping stones. Consequently they are unable to fully support their children's development in all the six areas of learning. Parents are not encouraged to share what they know about their children as they commence at playgroup which means that staff are unable to clearly identify children's starting points.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for by friendly and approachable staff. The manager works closely with her staff, who work generally well as a team. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and understand the Foundation Stage which results in satisfactory standards of education being provided. The provision organises activities and resources well to enable children to make choices and freely access them from around the room. Staff spend their time interacting with the children who are busy, engaged and provided with suitable activities and play opportunities to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

Records, policies and procedures are maintained in line with the National Standards. However, entries in the accident book are all on the same page which means that confidentiality is not always maintained. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the group is satisfactory. The manager has developed a good relationship with staff and offers support where required. However, regular appraisals are not carried out, staff are not involved in the day to day running of the group and are not able to identify training and development needs. Staff work together to implement a range of suitable activities which promote children's development. They are all involved in the development of children's learning, sitting with them and extending their language where appropriate. Staff prompt discussion and ask the children appropriate questions to ensure that they are progressing in their learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to develop an induction and appraisal system, ensure staff are effectively deployed during sessions, improve the lay-out of resources to enable children to make the best use of equipment and toys, amend the complaints procedure and develop staff's knowledge of child protection through appropriate training. The group were also asked to provide opportunities for children to serve themselves and each other at snack times to develop their independence and to continue to develop the curriculum planning to ensure activities build on what children know and offer appropriate challenge.

An induction system is now in place. The system for appraisals is yet to be implemented. Staff are well deployed throughout the session and are aware of what is expected of them although the manager is considering ways to redefine staff roles and provide staff with more opportunities to develop their practise and take on additional responsibilities. Play equipment has been reorganised to enable children to freely select their chosen activities. The complaints procedure has been updated and two members of staff have attended child protection training. The named 'helper of the day' distributes biscuits to children as part of their snack and children clear away their cups afterwards. However, children's independence needs to be encouraged further at this time. Assessments of children enable staff to identify what children can do and extend them through the stepping stones according to their abilities. Children are appropriately 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

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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 satisfactory.

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):

- provide opportunities for children to understand and take responsibility for their own personal hygiene, this relates to accessing their own tissues, wiping noses and disposing of tissues after use
- ensure that confidentiality is respected at all times, this relates to the accident records.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop the partnership with parents by providing parents with more information relating to the Foundation Stage curriculum and obtaining information from them to establish children's starting points
- develop children's independence skills at snack time, for example, by pouring their own drinks, helping to prepare and access snacks themselves
- develop an appraisal system so that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and areas for further professional development are identified and supported. This also relates 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