

Dogsthorpe Community Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256758
Inspection date	21 November 2007
Inspector	Carly Mooney
Setting Address	Poplar Avenue, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE1 4QF
Telephone number	01733 569922
E-mail	leonardmalkin@ntl.com
Registered person	The Trustees of Dogsthorpe Community Association
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?

Dogsthorpe Community Playgroup opened in 1972. It operates from a large hall in Dogsthorpe Community Centre in Dogsthorpe, Peterborough. The playgroup serves the local community. It operates five days a week, term time only. Sessions are from 09:00 to 12:00 hours.

The play group is registered to care for 26 children at any one time from two years to under five years. There are currently 18 children on roll. This includes 10 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs four staff. All main staff, including the supervisor hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to follow clear personal hygiene procedures and are independently learning to meet their own self-care needs. For example, they access tissues to wipe their own noses and dispose of them correctly in the bin. Children wash their hands before eating, and instinctively cover their mouths when they cough with very few reminders from staff. Staff are good role models and help to prevent the spread of infection by washing their own hands before serving food and wiping down tables with anti-bacterial fluid. Children learn to keep things clean as they eagerly help to wash and dry their cup and plate after snack. Children are well-protected should an accident occur as staff are first aid trained and appropriate records are kept which enables staff to respond appropriately in the event of an emergency.

Children's growth and development is promoted well as the snacks that are provided are healthy and nutritious. Children help themselves to crackers, which they spread themselves, cucumber, raisins and a variety of other fruit and vegetables. Children's likes and dislikes are taken into account as they help to choose the snack they would like from pictures of healthy foods on the snack board. Throughout the year children grow their own food to be eaten in the group, such as carrots which helps to give them an understanding of where food comes from. Children are offered a choice of drinks at snack time and can access their own named water bottles throughout the session, enabling them to control their own thirst. Snack time is well-paced, and children are not rushed and can eat as much as they would like. Staff use the time well to promote social skills, as children eat in small groups. Staff gather appropriate information to ensure that children's dietary needs can be met and that they are aware of possible allergies. For example, they use non-dairy spread, as there is a child attending the setting who has a dairy allergy.

Children enjoy a range of physical activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills when using both large and small apparatus, tools and equipment. Their fine muscle skills are developing well as they use a knife to spread butter on crackers, cut and roll with play dough tools and draw and paint with pencils and paintbrushes. Physical activities are encouraged both inside and outside. For example, children march like soldiers, play parachute games and push the pushchairs around the room, negotiating the space well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and brightly decorated environment, which is spacious and clean. Lively displays of children's artwork, posters and wall friezes create a welcoming atmosphere for children and their parents. Resources are set out attractively on children's arrival and are safe and suitable for the age range of the children attending. Children can move freely between activities and independently select their own resources from clearly labelled low-level storage units, allowing them to make further choices about their play.

There are many procedures in place which contribute to keeping children safe. For example, the premises are secure, there is a high staff to children ratio and weekly fire drills are carried out. Children demonstrate their confidence in following the fire drill procedure, as a fire drill was carried out during the inspection and they immediately lined up in the designated area. Daily risk assessments are in place and children are able to take calculated risks with good adult

supervision. For example, they use knives to cut up their own cucumber at snack. However, radiators in the room are scalding hot and pose a risk of injury to a child as they are accessible. Although, they are thermostatically controlled, during winter they need to be turned up high to heat the room to an adequate temperature but once turned down take too long to cool, therefore posing a hazard to children. The supervisor is aware of this and states that it is an ongoing problem that she is trying to rectify.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded as, parents complete paperwork which allows staff to act quickly if a child becomes ill or if there is a medical emergency. Children are never released to adults the group have no knowledge about. A clear child protection policy is in place which ensures that children's safety and well-being are the main concerns of the group. Staff have attended child protection training and are aware of the procedures to be followed should they have concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children happily attend the setting and are settling into their play group life with ease. They are familiar with the routines and have developed close relationships with the staff. Staff are very sensitive to younger children's needs and give them lots of freedom to explore their environment and make their own play choices. They are caring and provide appropriate support to ensure they settle when they first arrive. Staff have a secure knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and have integrated this well into their weekly plans. They ensure activities are age-appropriate for younger children and differentiated where needed, such as providing different sized paintbrushes and pencils to meet children's individual abilities. Children work well together and are caring and sociable. For example, one child passes another child some of his play dough because she didn't have enough. All children join in eagerly with the freely accessible toys and play equipment and in particular access the play dough table and building blocks.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have clear knowledge of the Foundation Stage and ensure that activities are effective in developing children's learning across all six areas of the curriculum. Detailed planning is in place which clearly relates to the early learning goals. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of how children learn and are able to develop their ideas and thinking. For example, acting on a child's interest in buying food for snack and providing a pen and paper to make his 'shopping list'. Staff are flexible, which ensures that children are interested, willing and eager to participate. Staff regularly observe children and use these observations to assess their progress towards the early learning goals and identify the next steps in their learning. However, a starting point for children's learning is missed as staff do not gather information from parents about their child when they begin. Records of achievements are further supported by examples of children's art work and photographs.

Children have many opportunities to be self-sufficient during the session, with good encouragement from staff. For example, they cut up their snack, pour their own drinks and wash up their cups and plates. They are familiar with the routine at tidy up time and eagerly participate which gives children a sense of responsibility. Children and staff chat happily together during play and snack time, which is used very positively as a social time. Children work well together and show perseverance in the parachute activity to get the ball through the hole.

They are developing an understanding of sharing and turn taking, such as sharing play dough tools and playing cat and mouse with the parachute.

Children have good opportunities to develop their mark-making skills on a daily basis. Mark-making areas are interesting and inviting and children enjoy spontaneous 'writing', as a child writes his shopping list for a member of staff to take to the shops. Children have many opportunities to see their name in print, such as self-registration, snack time and on their water bottles. Displays and resources are clearly labelled which helps children understand that print carries meaning. A comfortable book area and a good range of books encourages children to look at books independently. They enjoy sitting together to look at a book they have made at playgroup called 'knock knock who's there', which includes the children's pictures.

Children's counting skills are developing well as they confidently count from one to 10 and beyond. They are introduced to simple calculation through singing counting songs and counting the cups and plates at snack time needed for the number of children. There are daily opportunities to sort and match through the activities provided and observe numbers during play, such as on a calculator or wall displays. Children use mathematical language during their play, such as bigger and longer when rolling out the play dough.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted well. Children have planted seeds and grown a variety of vegetables and herbs, such as pumpkins, tomatoes and carrots. This has enabled children to observe the process as they have developed and changed into a food to be eaten and to show where our food comes from. Children explore and learn about their environment as they dig in the mud outside and have outside visitors attend the group, such as a mother and her baby when learning all about themselves. A good range of resources are available which promotes children's understanding of technology. For example, they take pictures using a digital camera and operate CD players, cash registers and programmable toys.

Children are able to be creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through craft, music and imaginative play. For example, children engage in spontaneous role play as they pretend to make a train with a row of chairs. Children enjoy music and movement sessions as they march in time to the Grand old Duke of York and tap out rhythms with the musical instruments. Children participate enthusiastically in familiar action songs, such as dingle dangle scarecrow and five little men in a flying saucer. They enjoy dancing spontaneously to music on the CD player and ask confidently for their favourite songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children from all backgrounds are warmly welcomed into the group by all staff. They arrive confidently and find their name and photograph for self-registration which gives them a sense of belonging. Children are very at ease with the staff and enjoy spending time with them. Children are treated as individuals and there are appropriate systems in place for caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to ensure their needs can be met. Children learn to value and respect diversity through celebrating festivals such as Divali, and accessing a suitable range of toys and play equipment which promotes equal opportunity, including dressing up clothes, books and posters.

Children's behaviour is good. They play in a very calm atmosphere, where a positive attitude to sharing and turn taking has developed. Children are always busy and occupied by the activities which contributes to their good behaviour. Staff give praise and encouragement to promote

children's self-esteem and are calm and consistent in their behaviour management. They talk to children at their level and give clear explanations as to why their behaviour is unacceptable. For example, please do not throw the conkers because you could hurt someone. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Positive relationships have formed with parents and carers which contributes significantly to children's well-being. Parents are able to access the play groups policies and procedures at any time and are welcomed to the group by an informative handbook. Parents are happy with the care their children receive.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are greeted well and approach staff with ease. A positive relationship with parents is developing, following a recent parent questionnaire. Staff are aware that parents are provided with insufficient information about the Foundation Stage and they are looking further into how parents can be involved in their child's learning. At the moment parents do not know what their child is learning on a weekly basis as no information, such as planning is displayed for them. Parents are warmly welcomed into the play group to discuss their child's progress through an open door policy and individual parent meetings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. They receive a good level of care from staff, who are appropriately qualified and have been subject to a robust vetting procedure. The play environment is laid out attractively with clearly defined areas and enough space for children to move about freely. Staff show a commitment to keeping their knowledge and teaching methods updated by seeking appropriate training courses to meet their own and children's developmental needs. Sessions are organised well, run at a good pace and allow children to have fun whilst they play.

Most documentation is comprehensive and used effectively to support the smooth running of the setting. However, the daily register does not record attendance times for staff. Therefore both staff and children's welfare is not fully safeguarded. Policies in place are regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective in practice for the promotion of children's health, safety and welfare. Aspects of safety regarding the temperature of radiators is under review at the moment.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. Staff are effective as a team and are clear in their roles and responsibilities on a daily basis. The supervisor has a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and a clear vision about how to provide a quality service to children and parents, which meets their needs. She is very supportive of her staff and a good role model for all. The provision is effectively managed and monitored through parent questionnaires, staff appraisals and regular meetings, therefore ensuring that the continuing needs of all children can be met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider received two actions relating to a procedure for lost or uncollected children and providing evidence that staff are suitable to work with children. Both these actions have now been met. There were four recommendations for care and these related to attendance recording, risk assessments, promotion of good hygiene and providing parents

with Ofsted's contact details. Through observation and discussion evidence has been provided that these have been met with minor amendments required with recording staff's attendance.

Under nursery education the provider was asked to ensure that goals set for children were realistic for their age and stage of development and that organisation of large group time was effective in meeting children's needs. Planning in place relates clearly to both the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' and ensures that activities are adapted to suit the different needs and ages of children attending. The play group has a large proportion of under three's and therefore large group times are kept to a minimum to ensure that children do not become bored or frustrated. These all have a positive impact on the care, learning and welfare of the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted which required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the national standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- improve the system for recording staff's attendance
- minimise potential risks to children's safety when using the main play room, with regard to the temperature of the radiators.

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 opportunities for parents to share their own knowledge and observations about what their child knows and can do, in order to provide a starting point for assessment and learning
- continue to develop communication with parents regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum and what their child will be learning on a regular basis.

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