

Singleton Playschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113696
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Inspector	Lisa Ellis
Setting Address	Singleton School, Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0HP
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Registered person	Singleton 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?

Singleton Playschool opened in 1996. It operates from a classroom in Singleton Primary School in Singleton, which is a village near Chichester in West Sussex. Children have access to the outdoor play areas within the school grounds. The playschool is committee run, has a close liaison with the primary school and serves the local rural community.

There are currently six children on roll. This includes three children who are in receipt of government funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens four mornings a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 12:00 on Mondays and Tuesdays and from 09:00 to 12:30 on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Three members of staff are employed to work with the children. The manager's role is shared between a qualified teacher and a nursery nurse. The group receives support from the local authority, the Pre-School Learning Alliance and teaching staff from the school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about healthy eating as they bring a piece of fruit in each day to share at snack time. Twice a week there is a lunch club where children bring in packed lunches which are stored in the fridge until they are ready to be eaten. A social event is made of snack and lunch times, with staff sitting with the children to eat, encouraging them to chat about themselves and promoting good table manners.

Children regularly participate in baking activities and are currently learning about growing. They have had recent opportunities to plant sunflowers, runner beans and potatoes. Drinking water is available at all times to ensure children remain suitably hydrated. As well as having drinks at snack and lunch time, children are also encouraged to have a drink after physical activities.

The health of the children is effectively promoted as there are well stocked first aid kits and two of the three members of staff hold current first aid qualifications. Parents have been asked to provide their written consent for staff to seek emergency medical treatment so children can be treated promptly following more serious incidents. Details of accidents and the administration of medication are well recorded and are shared with the parents to promote the health of the children.

Children are learning good hygiene procedures as they are taught to wash their hands prior to eating and after messy activities and using the toilet. They are protected from the risk of infection as the group excludes children with contagious ailments. Staff wear gloves when changing nappies and use anti-bacterial spray on surfaces to reduce the spread of germs.

Children benefit from physical activities on a daily basis, whether it's playing outside in the fresh air or participating in activities in the school hall to help develop their physical skills and contribute towards a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from having sole use of the playschool room and shared use of the primary school grounds and hall. The playschool unit has its own kitchen area and children's bathroom as well as areas for table top and floor activities. The room is very welcoming to children as it is bright, warm, clean and well maintained and has a wide range of children's work displayed around the walls to help them to feel part of the group.

The room is well laid out into different areas for computer work, looking at books, snuggling up with cushions and blankets and areas for arts and crafts. Children choose their own resources from boxes and drawers that are labelled and stored accessibly to promote children's independence. Equipment is kept clean, is suitable for the age range and covers all areas of learning.

Children's safety is given a high priority. They are well supervised and visitors to the group have to be let in through the school after signing a visitors' book. Children are unable to leave the premises unnoticed and staff are vigilant about closely supervising the children when outside, ensuring all gates are locked, and children are aware of how to keep themselves safe.

Children practise safe evacuation on a regular basis so they are aware of the action to take should there be an emergency.

Children's well-being is promoted as there are written guidelines in place that will be followed should staff have concerns regarding children's welfare. However, staff have not undertaken recent child protection training and believe that they would benefit from refresher training in this area to ensure that their knowledge is up to date and they are confident to deal with child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from excellent interaction with all members of staff. They are happy and relaxed in their company and often involve them in their play and discussions. Children are learning how to become competent learners and skilful communicators as they chat to staff about what they are doing and about their families and home life. They are secure in the familiar surroundings, following the simple routines so they know what comes next in the sessions. The younger children are given the same learning opportunities as the older ones, with the staff adapting activities as necessary to give them help where needed. New children are helped to become independent as staff help them to pour their own drinks and show them where resources belong so they can help put things away.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. As the group is so small, staff know the children and their individual capabilities extremely well. This helps them to plan developmentally appropriate activities to help all the children make good progress in all areas of their learning. Staff have a very good understanding of where children may need additional support or can be challenged further in their learning to help them achieve their full potential. The staff plan activities as a team, ensuring that each theme covers all areas of learning to provide children with a wide range of enjoyable opportunities. As children play, staff make observations and use them in their assessments to highlight the next steps in children's development. Staff make worthwhile evaluations of activities to assess whether the learning intentions have been met and whether it is worth repeating activities again.

Children settle quickly on arrival and show confidence and independence throughout the sessions. For example, they select their own resources, take themselves to the toilet, pour their own drinks and get their own outdoor clothing on when it is time to play outside. Children are very caring and helpful to the younger children, for example, an older children did up the toggles on a younger child's coat for her, then took her by the hand and led her outside to play. Children enjoy the responsibility of being the special helper who is changed each day so all children get to have a turn at helping staff with jobs such as getting toys out and handing out fruit at snack time.

Children are making very good progress in mathematics and communication. Staff plan sessions well to help children develop skills for reading, writing and listening as well as understanding about shape, size, weight and measure. Children are effectively questioned throughout sessions to make them think. They are learning about sounds in their names and become familiar with print in books and on labels throughout the room. New words are introduced to broaden children's vocabulary and they are inquisitive about the world around them, often asking questions about what they are playing with. Staff give children full explanations when they ask

questions, for example, one child picked up a toy milk urn and asked what it was, the member of staff explained that it is used in dairies to collect milks from cows. She then went on to explain how the milk ends up in our homes ready to drink.

Children learn about the world around them through well planned activities and discussions with staff. They are very aware of nature and the rural environment in which the playschool is situated. They are actively encouraged to observe their surroundings and notice differences in the environment. They show genuine interest in the plants that they have grown in the group and enjoy experiencing the smells and textures of soil as they plant potatoes. They have opportunities to extend their learning about growing through the use of a computer where they practise skills such as clicking and dragging. Games are carefully chosen to compliment the themes that children are learning about.

Children have many opportunities to express their creativity and show their imaginations. As well as adult led activities, there are many opportunities for child initiated art and crafts. A book has been put together called 'our playschool family' where the children have all used a range of different materials to make an image of themselves. When using the outdoor environment, children thoroughly enjoy role play where they drive their toy tractors to pretend petrol stations and garages and to go and feed the animals.

Children's physical skills are developing well. They show good spatial awareness as they safely manoeuvre ride-on toys around the playground, negotiating pathways and managing not to crash into others. They practise using their fine motor skills by participating in activities such as using scissors and hammering small pegs into a board. Their gross motor skills are practised on a daily basis with the use of bicycles, climbing, sliding and balancing equipment. They show delight when joining in with races and recognise the effect that exercise has on their bodies, such as getting hot and thirsty and their hearts beating harder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are met following discussion with parents. There is a written equality policy in place and the group is open to all children. There are some resources that reflect the wider world, such as books and role play equipment and children enjoy listening to music from different countries, with some of them happily humming along as they play. Children are taught to value the differences of others and are treated with equal respect. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children are very well behaved and talk about sharing and taking turns with their peers. Staff act as positive role models to the children, encouraging them to use good manners and be kind to each other. Children are gently reminded of the behavioural boundaries when necessary and are encouraged to sort out minor squabbles between themselves which helps them to develop their social skills. Children are praised by the staff to encourage positive behaviour and receive stickers to value their personal achievements.

New parents receive a welcome pack giving information about the aims of the group, details about staff and general information about what to dress children in and what to bring. They are invited to be involved in the group by fund raising, being a helper and joining the committee. A complaints procedure is in place and there are appropriate systems in place to record any complaints. Ofsted's contact details are available should parents choose to make a complaint

directly to them. Verbal feedback is given to parents at the end of sessions regarding how their children have been and what they have been doing.

The quality of the partnership with parents of children in receipt of government funding for nursery education is satisfactory. Parents have access to written information about the Foundation Stage, the six areas of learning and the types of activities that their children will be involved in. Although parents in the playschool receive a newsletter from the primary school, it does not contain any information about what the children are learning about in playschool and does not give any information about what parents could do at home with their children to compliment what they are learning in the group. Parents are able to see their children's progress files at any time and will receive a written report at the end of the year, showing children's progress in relation to the areas of learning. However, the progress reports do not have space for parents to comment on or to contribute towards the next steps in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The group meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The staff team are newly formed and work well together. They are all appropriately vetted to promote the welfare of the children. Systems are in place to check the ongoing suitability of staff, including annual appraisals to monitor their effectiveness. New staff are appropriately inducted to promote consistency of care for the children.

Staff ratios are maintained and daily attendance registers are kept although they lack detail. For example, although children are marked in the register, times are not recorded when they arrive and depart and records are not kept of when staff are present which does not provide a true record of attendance.

Staff all hold relevant qualifications, are aware of their training needs and are willing to attend additional workshops to ensure their childcare knowledge remains up to date. All of the required regulatory paperwork is in place, is stored confidentially and is shared with the parents to help promote positive outcomes for children. There is a selection of relevant policies and procedures in place, although some are out of date due to new members joining the committee.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The whole staff team and committee meet regularly to monitor the effectiveness of the group. All staff and committee members have clearly defined roles and responsibilities to help the group to run smoothly. The managers are hands on with the children and spend all their time in the group. They oversee practice and work well with the assistant to plan a fun and interesting range of activities to capture the children's imaginations and help them to make progress in all areas of development.

Children benefit from the liaison that staff have with the primary school where they share resources and ideas for activities to provide different learning opportunities for the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were raised relating to care. They were to develop an action plan that sets out how staff training and qualification requirements will be met and to improve the staff's knowledge and understanding of special educational needs with regard to the Code of Practice (2002).

The first recommendation is no longer relevant due to the staff team changing since the last inspection. There are now three practitioners employed to work with the children, of whom one is a teacher, one has a level 3 qualification and the other is very experienced in early years settings and has a level two qualification. There are systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and practitioners are aware of the support they can receive from the local authority in assisting them to meet the needs of individual children.

There were three key issues raised at the last inspection relating to the provision of nursery education. They were to provide more opportunities for linking letters to sounds, writing and mark marking, to introduce the use of more labels which relate to familiar objects and displays in the provision and to develop more detailed curriculum planning, in order to provide extended learning activities for the older and more able children.

The key issues relating to education have been met as there is now a good selection of displays which are all labelled as well as labels showing items such as door, chair and clock. This helps children to recognise print and encourage early literacy skills. Time is now made throughout the sessions to link sounds with letters both formally and informally to help children learn the letter sounds in their names and of other familiar items. The opportunities for children to mark make are now more regular and they can freely access writing materials to practise their emergent writing skills. It has not been necessary to develop more detailed curriculum planning as the group is so small and practitioners know the group of children and their individual capabilities well enough to know when to extend activities to ensure 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

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):

- improve the register to provide an accurate record of all children's attendance and the attendance of staff
- ensure staff have up to date knowledge regarding child protection

- ensure policies are kept up to date

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):

- provide parents with more information about what they can do with their children at home to compliment what they are learning in the group
- develop ways to involve parents in setting goals for their 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