

Southgate West Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY268196
Inspection date	05 December 2007
Inspector	Janet Marie Thouless
Setting Address	Hilltop Primary School, Ditchling Hill, Southgate West, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 8QL
Telephone number	01293 511008
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Southgate West 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?

Southgate West Playgroup was registered at its present site in 2003. However, the playgroup had been operating for over thirty years at a previous site. The group operates from Hilltops Primary School which is situated in the Southgate area of Crawley, West Sussex. The facilities comprises of a large classroom and toilet facilities. Children have access to a hard standing and grassed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 26 children from three to five years may attend the playgroup at anyone time. There are currently 52 children on roll of which 49 receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup welcomes children with additional needs and who speak English as an additional language. Children attend a variety of sessions.

The playgroup is open five mornings from 09.00 - 11.30 and 12.20 - 14.50 every weekday during term time, with children attending from the local and surrounding areas.

The playgroup is supported by a team of staff who have current Childcare qualifications along with First Aid training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy and are protected, because the playgroup follows effective health and hygiene guidelines and procedures. Children learn the importance of good hygiene practice through well established daily routines; for example, hand washing before and after snack times, messy play and toilet routines. They confidently follow picture labels as guidance to the sequences of events around hand washing. Therefore, children increase their independence and personal care successfully.

Staff are fully aware of children's individual dietary needs which are clearly displayed on a whiteboard. Snacks include a wide range of fresh fruit, plain biscuits and bread sticks with staff promoting fruit as their first option. Children take turns in preparing fruits for snack time and discuss if the skin of the banana and Satsuma should be left on or eaten. They agree together that the skin must be removed 'we don't eat the skin it will taste horrible'. They count the number of children present to ensure they have enough fruit and pots. Children's thirst is quenched as they help themselves to their individual drinks. Children confidently select snacks, place them in pots and periodically sit on the carpet to enjoy a story whilst eating.

The accident and medication records are in place, however on occasion medical records lack sufficient detail, for example, amount given and time of administration. All staff are trained to administer first aid and parents have given their written permission to enable them to seek emergency medical care. Consequently, children's well-being is assured because they are able to receive appropriate help if they are injured or taken ill whilst at the playgroup.

Children participate in a range of vigorous physical activity both indoor and out and develop good control over their bodies. They enjoy throwing bean bags into hoops identifying individual colours and numbers and use the climbing frame with confidence. They reverse and turn wheeled toys with good control and co-ordination. Children's fine motor skills are developing well. They are competent when using small equipment, such as, spatulas, paint brushes, pencils and scissors within craft activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Space is organised well to meet the children's needs. Children can independently select from the wide range of good quality, age appropriate resources in the warm, welcoming and clean classroom environment.

Fire prevention is good and regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures, so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely. The building is fairly secure and the setting is mostly accessed through the main door which leads directly in to the playgroup. However, visitors are also able to enter the premises unchallenged through the main entrance to the Early Years Unit which could compromise children and staff safety. Effective systems are in place for the safe arrival and collection of children. Furthermore, children are not allowed to leave with any adult unless parents have given their permission and a password is known.

Risks have been identified and measures put in place to minimise accidental injury; for example, all electrical sockets are covered, fire notices are displayed and a fire blanket is attached to the

wall in the kitchen area for ease of use. There are clear procedures for outings that ensure children's safety off site.

The children's welfare is safeguarded because the playgroup has child protection procedures in place which staff are able to put into practice should concerns arise. Staff have secure knowledge of their role in safeguarding children and attend training on a regular basis. They know and understand the procedures to follow should they believe a child to be at risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy to be at the playgroup and enjoy choosing what they would like to do from the selection of activities prepared for them. Staff leave a selection of tables empty to allow children to self select to develop their independence. They separate confidently from their parents and carers, showing they have made trusting relationships within the playgroup. Children are keen to learn and are encouraged to try out new skills which foster their emotional wellbeing and help them to achieve well.

Staff support children well, providing them with praise and encouragement. They help children express their thoughts and ideas, and follow their individual interests. They enjoy choosing hands-on activities such as crafts and role play. This captures their interest and provides many opportunities to explore and experiment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are eager to try new experiences; therefore, they make steady progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and have attended a range of workshops to ensure their knowledge is up to date. They know how young children learn and this is reflected in the learning environment, range of resources and programme of activities on offer. Staff complete observations to monitor children's progress, However, development records have not been updated on a regular basis to chart individual children's learning and to inform future planning.

Children arrive happy and settle quickly, they separate easily from parents or carers and seek out friends. They are becoming confident learners as they participate in the range of activities on offer. They approach staff to converse, express their views and ideas and have established warm and friendly relationships with both staff and their peers. Children are able to concentrate on self-chosen challenges, for example, two children happily play side by side for a long period of time constructing a train set. They dig up soil in the outdoor area showing good co-ordination with the use of the plastic diggers happily chatting to each other about what they are doing.

Children benefit from the broad range of books in the welcoming and comfortable book corner; books are stored at low level and are easy for children to access. Children enjoy listening to stories at group story time and particularly enjoy looking at photographs of recent events in home made books. They discuss emotions, such as happy and sad, confidently sharing their thoughts and ideas and frequently ask staff to read favourite stories to them.

Children talk confidently about their home life and family showing pleasure in sharing information with others such as their daddy was at home today. They confidently state that they have been at the playgroup for 'ten years' and when asked how old they are they stated

'one'. Children enjoy focused activities where they learn to write their names and familiar words and have many opportunities to write within spontaneous or free flow play; for example, in the Santa's Workshop they write letters to him which they post in the post box.

Children have opportunities to explore a range of experiences which enable them to develop their senses and express themselves creatively, for example, they enjoy planting spring bulbs in tubs and monitoring their progress. They work together to make a life size model of a dinosaur and seasonal decorations. However, many activities are adult led and craft resources have been pre-prepared by staff which impacts on children's creativity and does not provide sufficient challenge. They select programmes on the computer with confidence and enjoy number and colour recognition games, use the mouse with good control and confidently use the range of programmable resources on offer.

Children use their imaginations well in role play. They enjoy placing clothes in the washing machine and hanging them up to dry. They chat to each other as they play stating that the dress is 'gorgeous'. They play under a canopy alongside the climbing frame and chant; 'one, two, three blast off' as they jump off. After group story time they confidently sing a range of rhymes often requesting their favourite. This develops children's imagination, confidence and self esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff provide a range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world, for example, through topics such as Diwali and Christian festivals. Previous topics include visits from the fire officer, nurse and paramedics to introduce to children people that help us. Good displays and photographs show that children are offered many opportunities to find out about other cultures and religions which helps them to develop a positive attitude and respect for others. Staff use resources including books, puzzles and role-play items that reflect diversity to help children appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences. Parents are invited to share their skills and a Moroccan parent happily shared the preparation and cooking of couscous with children.

All children in the playgroup are valued and respected as individuals by staff, who take great care to ensure that all children are included. There are effective procedures in place to adapt established routines to accommodate and integrate children with additional needs. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Children's behaviour is handled appropriately for their age and stage of development. Good behaviour is reinforced with lots of praise and encouragement and staff act as good role models. Staff use positive methods for recognition of their behaviour, for example giving lots of praise to children for being kind and helpful to each other or simply helping to tidy away. Many children benefit from the smooth transition from playgroup to the school classroom which is located in the same building. Children who go on to attend the school enjoy building relationships with teaching staff before their placement begins which supports their emotional well being and self esteem.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are able to view their children's individual development records at the end of each year. However, ongoing discussions take place to share children's progress. The playgroup offers an effective induction session to new parents which provides parents and carers with information on daily routines. Further information

offered includes a prospectus, a regular newsletter and information displayed on the notice boards. However, parents are not provided with sufficient information in relation to curriculum planning to enable them to become actively involved in their children's learning. Clear systems are in place to ensure that all parents' comments and concerns are recorded. This lists the steps to be taken if a parent has a complaint and how the complaint will be investigated along with the outcome as required.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by qualified, experienced and consistent staff who have been appropriately vetted to ensure they are suitable to work with young children. Induction training, policies and procedures work well in practice ensuring the efficient and smooth management of the playgroup. Management has high regard and respect for the staff team and they work well together. Through regular supervision staff training needs are identified and management effectively supports staff training and development. All mandatory policies and procedures are in place. However, some policies and procedures, such as medication and health and safety procedures require updating to ensure children's well being and safety.

Leadership and Management is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the provision and the educational programme enable children to make steady progress towards the early learning goals. The staff team have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and contribute to the planning of the curriculum. However, management have not ensured that developmental records have been updated by staff on a regular basis to chart individual children's learning and to inform future planning. Management evaluate the service provided and there is a strong commitment to creating a rich learning environment for children. Leadership and management ensure staff are motivated and well trained to enable them to fulfil their individual roles effectively. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, two actions and three recommendations were made to implement a procedure in the event of a lost or uncollected child, develop a Child Protection policy outlining procedure to be followed in the event of a child being abused and if an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer. Ensure parents are aware of the contact details of the regulatory body in the event of a complaint, ensure an effective induction programme for staff is available and that effective measures are in place for the recruitment of staff.

The playgroup has fully implemented all actions and recommendation to ensure the safety and well being of children and staff. Policies and procedures are in place to inform parents of the complaints procedure and a clear recruitment and induction policy has been fully implemented.

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.

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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 the recording of medication contains sufficient detail.
- improve the general security of the building to ensure visitors do not enter unchallenged.

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):

- share information with parent and carers in relation to curriculum planning to enable them to become actively involved in their children's learning.
- ensure activities provide suitable challenge for all children.
- ensure the observations are suitably recorded to chart individual children's progress through the stepping stones and the information is used to inform future planning.

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