

Menheniot Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	102924
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Inspector	Sarah Jane Wignall
Setting Address	The Old School, Menheniot, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 3QS
Telephone number	07931 596 723
E-mail	
Registered person	Menheniot Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Full day 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 satisfactory. 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?

Menheniot Playgroup is a committee run group. It opened in 1985 and operates from two rooms in the Old School House in Menheniot. It is situated in the village of Menheniot in Cornwall. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9.00 until 15.00 and from 9.00 until 12.00 on a Tuesday and Thursday, during term times only. All children share access to a secure enclosed play area.

There are currently 36 children from two to four years on roll. Of these 13 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties/disabilities.

The pre-school employs four members of staff. Over half the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is currently working towards qualification. The setting receives support from an advisory teacher from Family Services. They are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted as staff ensure the setting is warm and welcoming. They have effective procedures in place to keep the setting clean and hygienic. Staff keep the kitchen clean and tidy and ensure the fridge temperature is checked each day. Tables are cleaned and wiped before children eat and they are reminded to wash their hands before sitting down to snack or lunch. Children learn about oral hygiene as they brush their teeth after snack. They enthusiastically brush their teeth with staff reminding them that it is important to brush hard to keep teeth clean and healthy. Children are protected as staff keep suitable accident and medication records. They ensure there is a qualified first aider on the premises at all times and they have easy access to a well stocked first aid kit.

Children benefit as they are provided with a wide range of healthy snack foods each day. Staff operate a café style snack system where children can help themselves to items of fresh and dried fruit, savoury biscuits, cheese and other items. They pour themselves drinks of water or juice with their snack and can help themselves to water at other times from the water fountain located in the play room. Children staying all day bring a packed lunch which is stored appropriately. Staff ensure they are fully aware of any special diets or allergies.

While children do not currently have access to a designated outdoor play area, staff ensure they get lots of opportunities for physical exercise and fresh air each day. Each day starts with a physical play session where children show delight as they wiggle, jump and hop in time to a music tape. They demonstrate great coordination and control as they ride bikes. They skilfully avoid obstacles as they pedal around the room. Daily walks around the village are used to teach children about road safety as well as the opportunity to visit the village park where they have access to challenging play equipment. Children show fine motor control as they pour their own drinks, use scissors, pencils and glue sticks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit as they are cared for in adequate premises which are generally made safe and secure. Staff undertake risk assessments to help identify and minimise hazards. However, some broken wood panelling in the adjoining play room presents a risk to children. Staff ensure appropriate security measures are in place and the main entrance door is locked during sessions. Children learn about fire safety as they practice regular fire drills. Staff ensure children are safe and visible as they go on walks around the village. All children and staff wear florescent safety jackets and children hold onto a crocodile rope. Children learn that it is important to stop, look and listen before crossing the road.

Children have access to a suitable range of toys and resources each day. Staff ensure these are maintained in a suitable state of repair. Risk assessments and visual checks are used to ensure that communal play equipment in the local park is safe and suitable for young children's use. Children learn about safety in the setting. Staff constantly remind them that they must not run when moving between play rooms.

Children are protected as staff have an adequate understanding of child protection procedures. Some staff have attended workshops to help increase their knowledge and skills and the deputy

play leader is booked to attend detailed training in the near future. Staff have a suitable awareness of action to take if concerned about children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young children are generally content and settle quickly on arrival. They are well included in all activities and are able to make choices about their play. Staff offer sufficient support so that children can participate in and complete activities that are available. For instance young children enjoy playing with sand and water and show good levels of concentration as they fill and empty containers. Young children are gaining independence in the setting and staff offer good verbal support as they wash their hands and clean their teeth. They are developing confidence as they say their name at circle time. Staff have begun to undertake observations of their progress but these are not always used to identify the next steps in learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory and children are making sound progress. Staff plan a varied range of practical activities each day. Sessions are appropriately organised with a suitable balance between adult led and child initiated play. The introduction of the café style snack system ensures that there is minimal disruption to play. Staff use weekly plans to help guide sessions and provide a balance of activities across the six areas of learning. Observations and assessments of children's progress are undertaken but they are not always used effectively to influence the weekly learning intentions or to differentiate between the needs of the more able and less able children within the group.

Children show good levels of concentration at chosen activities and they are learning to work together to achieve an outcome, for instance when working together to make a large fairy castle out of boxes and other resources. They have good relationships with others and several children enjoy dressing up together to play princesses and other games. Children are learning to recognise their name as they self register in the café. They are developing language skills as staff ask them to describe the items they will need to make a fairy castle. Children contribute 'boxes, toilet rolls and soft play resources'. Children enjoy writing and making marks and some children are beginning to write their own names. Children create their own pictures using language to describe what they have drawn. They enjoy listening to stories in large groups but books are not well presented within the setting. Children do not have regular opportunities to gain an understanding of the link between sounds and letters.

Children are gaining an understanding of numbers and counting as they recognise different numbers as they walk around the village. Children recognise two and three on garage doors and correctly predict that the first garage will be numbered one. They learn about different shapes in the environment as they describe a board as a square and a garage as a rectangle. They make castle pictures describing the flags as triangle shapes. Children do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about calculation during everyday routines and planned activities. Children are skilled as they create shapes and structures. They use glue and tape to join materials when making a large castle or sticking shapes on a picture. They are learning about technology as they play games and create pictures and patterns on the computer. They learn about growth and change as they plant seeds and bulbs and watch them grow. Children learn how to care for animals as they bring food for the guinea pig and occasionally take him home to care for. They use their imagination well when dressing up and inventing games. They show delight as

they put on tabards and take the role of the dragon or knight when re-enacting a story. Children have access to a suitable range of craft and creative resources each session.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit as staff have an adequate understanding of their individual needs. They have recently developed a key worker board where children's photos are displayed and interesting information about what they like doing is recorded, helping to give new staff a better understanding of their likes and dislikes. Good links with the local community help to give children a good sense of belonging. They learn about the local community as they walk around the village, visit the local church and dairy farms. They learn about different roles in society as they visit the main fire station in the adjoining town. Good links with the local primary school help children feel more confident as they move into mainstream school. Children learn about difference and diversity as they celebrate other festivals within the curriculum or look at posters and pictures displayed within the play room. Children with learning difficulties are well included during sessions and their individual needs recognised and addressed.

Children benefit as staff manage behaviour in a suitable way. They teach children the correct way to behave in terms of safety within the setting. Staff remind children that it is not safe to run between play rooms. They use verbal praise to reinforce appropriate behaviour such as sitting nicely at circle time or completing a piece of work well. They encourage children to be independent in terms of meeting their own needs for toileting, hand washing and deciding when they are hungry to visit the café.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The setting is run by a voluntary management committee made up of parents. All parents are encouraged to be involved both in helping on rota duty or with fund raising events. Parents are provided with good quality information which includes access to policies and procedures and regular newsletters home. Weekly key themes are displayed for parents' information. Occasional parents' days are planned where parents are invited in to help with a particular activity such as making biscuits for Mother's Day. Recently introduced parents' meetings are used as a way of sharing development records and discussing ongoing targets for development. The pre-school fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are suitably cared for by staff that are appropriately qualified and committed to their roles. A recent change to the manager has led to some reorganisation at the group. Staff deployment is not always well thought through with unvetted staff not adequately supervised throughout the session. Staff plan sessions appropriately, making suitable use of the indoor space for physical play and music and movement sessions. Good use of the local park helps children to have fresh air and exercise in the absence of designated outdoor play facilities. While staff keep a daily attendance register it does not accurately record children's times of arrival and departure where these differ from normal session times. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place and well organised.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is satisfactory. While the setting is managed by a supportive management committee, day to day leadership is provided by the manager who is responsible for the delivery of nursery education. She has only been manager since September

last year and is slowly introducing changes at the group, such as the recently introduced parents' evenings. She is appropriately supported by other staff, some of whom are new in post and gaining an awareness of their roles and responsibilities. The committee are keen to develop practice at the group and have recently introduced staff appraisals and monthly supervision sessions. They hope this will be a way to monitor and identify any ongoing training or other needs. The manager seeks advice from outside agencies such as Family Services and the Pre-School Learning Alliance. Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to conduct a risk assessment identifying actions to take to minimise identified risks inside and outside of the premises and to develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour. They were also asked to ensure fresh drinking water is available to children and to ensure the complaints policy contains the name, address and telephone number of the regulator. In addition they were asked to provide opportunities for parents to receive regular information on their children's progress.

At the last nursery education inspection they were asked to review and update the group's policies and ensure that they are followed in practice. They were also asked to ensure that records clearly demonstrate the children's ongoing progress in all aspects of the six learning areas and that they are used to influence plans and to regularly inform parents about their children's progress. In addition they were asked to give greater priority to the provision of large physical activities in order to give children regular opportunities to practise and develop their skills.

Children's safety is improved as staff undertake risk assessments to help identify and minimise risks. Children benefit as staff manage behaviour in an appropriate way and they work closely with parents ensuring they are kept informed of their child's progress. Children's health is improved as they now have constant access to drinking water throughout the session. The complaints procedure now contains the contact details of the regulator.

Policies and procedures have recently been updated and are used to inform practice at the group. Children are making sound progress as staff regularly complete observation and assessment records and are beginning to use this to influence planning. Children benefit from use of the local park where they can access large climbing equipment on a regular basis.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1st April 2004 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 satisfactory. 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):

- ensure daily attendance register accurately reflects children's times of attendance each day
- ensure all staff are aware of roles and responsibilities and deployed effectively throughout the session. Ensure unvetted staff are well supervised at all times
- ensure all areas of the building are maintained in a suitable state of repair

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):

- ensure learning intentions reflect individual needs within the group and differentiate between the needs of the more able and less able children
- provide more opportunities for children to gain an understanding of the link between sounds and letters and ensure books are presented attractively and children encouraged to use them independently throughout the session
- provide more opportunities for children to develop their understanding of calculating during everyday practical routines and planned activities.

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