

Stratton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	102959
Inspection date	09 January 2008
Inspector	Judith Harris
Setting Address	Stratton Primary School, New Road, Stratton, Bude, Cornwall, EX23 9AP
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Registered person	Stratton Pre-School 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?

Stratton Playgroup opened in 1983. The pre-school occupies its own premises, which are in the grounds of the local Primary School in Stratton in Cornwall. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday morning 09:00 to 11:45, on Tuesday afternoon 12:45 to 15:15 and for a toddler session on Thursday afternoon 13:30 to 15:30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are currently 24 children on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for early education.

The pre-school employs four members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are successfully developing an understanding of simple good health and hygiene practices. They have clear hand-washing routines and all children go to wash hands before snack. The child sized toilets are directly accessible so children can use them unaided if they are able. Children wash their hands after toileting or messy play and staff occasionally have to give gentle reminders. Staff use good health and hygiene routines and appropriate health and hygiene guidelines are followed at all times. A parent volunteer is on duty each session and they help to keep the space clean and tidy during the session; they prepare the snack and wash up. The pre-school has good policies and procedures for the exclusion of sick children and children are encouraged to use hygiene practise to prevent the spread of infection.

Children have daily outdoor activities in the garden which has three areas for play. Outdoor play is planned for as part of the daily planning and provides activities under each area of learning. There is a paved area with a zebra crossing and the children use this to ride bikes and play with balls. They practise their safe road crossing skills at the zebra crossing. There is a small fenced off area with bark chippings where children can dig and explore and experiment. There is also a grassed area where children have climbing and sliding equipment and an area for planting. The pre-school also has use of the school playground and the nature trail. Inside the pre-school children move with confidence using push-a-long toys. They use tools safely and with control; at the dough table they use rolling pins and cutters and at the art activity they use cars to paint with.

Children are provided with healthy nutritious snacks and drinks. Snack time is staggered so children can choose when they come to the table and their play is not interrupted. Children have water or milk to drink and fruit to eat. Staff talk to children about what they are eating and about trying different fruits. Drinking water is available throughout the session. If children have any special dietary needs or dietary restriction these are on their individual records and shared with the staff team.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean well organised environment where they can move around safely and have areas for different types of play. The pre-school have sole use of their building and garden area. There is a comprehensive system for risk assessments, and active steps are taken to minimise any risks. The high adult ratios ensure that children are well supervised inside and in the garden. If the children use any other areas, such as the school playground or the nature trail, then there is a system to risk asses these areas also. The building is secure and visitors have to ring the bell and show identification. They are then signed in by a member of staff. The pre-school has a procedure for answering the door and for monitoring the entrance at the beginning and end of each session when parents are dropping off or collecting children. Children's records give details of who can collect them and any changes to this must be notified to the pre-school staff and recorded. All fire safety equipment is in place and regular fire drills are carried out with all children present.

Children have a good range of toys and equipment with good access to allow them to make choices about what to play with. There is a system for checking that all toys and equipment

are clean and well maintained. The children play with age appropriate play materials and resources. Children's play is monitored by adults to ensure children use toys safely and with control. The current theme is travel by road and the children have a road crossing kit that they are using to practise their road crossing skills in a role play game.

The children are protected because the staff are familiar with the paperwork and procedures for recording and reporting child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children come confidently into the group where the activities are set out for them to access immediately. Children are provided with a very wide range of stimulating and interesting activities. The adults sit with the children actively engaging with them, talking about what they are doing and supporting the children's play. There is a calm and relaxed atmosphere in the pre-school. Children have an exceptional amount of free play with time and space to develop their play. Children are animated and enthusiastic at play and fully involved in the activities which are clearly supporting their learning and development.

Nursery Education

Children are able to practise handwriting at a range of activities. In the office children have books and paper and pencils to write for different purposes. One child is writing everyone's names for a game she is inventing. Children have name cards that they use at different activities to help them learn to identify their names. Most children can identify their names and some can say the sound of the letter their name begins with. Children freely access the book corner throughout the session. Children are counting with confidence and there are lots of activities that encourage children to learn maths concepts. At the activities the adults use maths language to encourage the children to think about longer and shorter, and bigger and smaller. Children take part in a very good range of activities that help them learn about their own community and photo evidence shows visits from different people in the community. The pre-school has very good connections with the school and takes part in school events. To support children to gain an understanding of the wider world the pre-school has looked at different celebrations including Diwali. Children tasted food, listened to music from India and made Diwali lamps. They painted their hands in the style of Mendhi a traditional Indian custom. Children have lots of opportunities to gain an understanding of the natural world. They are planting and digging in the garden where they can explore and experiment with natural materials. Children have regular visits to the school's nature trail where they are able to investigate nature through the seasons. Children use extensive imaginative skills to create role play games. They play in the house and in the office where they are inventing games that they have the time and space to develop. Children are taking time to think about the game and negotiate the rules with the other children. The planning provides creative art and craft activities in line with the theme and the children are clearly delighted to take part in this activity. However, this is not clearly balanced with daily access to materials that children can use to be purely creative. Children have regular music sessions which are led by a musically trained parent. They also sing familiar songs together and listen to music from different countries.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The pre-school uses a very effective planning system that plans activities under topics for each term. The daily plans are clear and well written with activities under each area of learning. The plans show what children will be supported to do and what the learning intentions are. These link clearly to the areas of learning and include

an evaluation of the whole session and evaluation of the main creative activity with a comment for each child. The theme this week is travel by road and this is clearly linked through the activities; children are rolling cars in the paint and printing with them. There are car, bus and train cutting shapes at the dough, and a garage with cars and trucks on the floor. Children are playing with diggers in the sand and they sing songs about transport. Children practise safe road crossing with a role play game. The planning and observations show that all staff have a very clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and are able to provide a stimulating learning environment where children have free access to a range of activities that cover the areas of learning. The pre-school uses a key-worker system that ensures children are spontaneously observed by staff. These observations are used to develop individual plans for each child that are focused on the child's learning needs and their interests. These plans take the form of a spider chart with the child's interests at the centre and a comment for each area of learning linking to the next steps. At the bottom of the individual plans is an area for parents to complete about child's interests at home and one for the key-worker to suggest possible activities for home. Each child has a file that contains their individual plan and samples of their work. These records unquestionably provide a comprehensively clear picture of each child, their progress and their next steps.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and at home in the calm atmosphere of the pre-school where they are developing very good levels of independence. Children have space and time for play and can freely choose from the activities provided. Children play well together; they are happy to share and take turns and they are clearly learning the codes for behaviour. The children are well behaved and the staff support the children's positive behaviour by keeping them busy with activities and supporting them to make choices. Staff clearly know the children well and have warm caring relationships with them. They know what may cause a child to become upset or frustrated and step in quickly to support them. The effective behaviour management clearly helps the children to develop good skills for self-control. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities can be fully supported by the pre-school who have good policies and procedures for inclusion.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are provided with a well produced prospectus which gives them clear information about the pre-school, and all policies and procedures are available for parents to view. The staff have daily informal exchanges of information with parents and there is a formal parent and key worker meeting each term to talk about children's progress. Each child has good clear records which are effectively shared with parents and include a section for information from parents. Key-workers regularly provide parents with ideas for activities to do at home. There is a parents' notice board where information about the pre-school is displayed, and parents have a regular newsletter. The pre-school has an effective complaints procedure with Ofsted details displayed. The pre-school is run by the parents' committee and there is a parents rota that ensures a volunteer is available for every session. The volunteers are very effectively used and sensibly deployed to allow staff to spend optimum time with children. Information is taken from parents at admission about what children like doing and what personal tasks they may need help with. However, this does not provide extensive information about children's individual starting points.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children play in well organised play space where they can move around with confidence. The pre-school has good daily routines that are flexible and relaxed, allowing children to develop good levels of independence. Children are happy and secure in the pre-school with a clear sense of belonging.

Children's records and a daily register are in place and up to date. There are medication and accident records and contracts for all children, and all records are kept in a confidential manner.

Policies and procedures that make up the operational plan are available for parents to read and there is a notice board which displays information for parents.

Management and leadership are good. The pre-school has a close knit close team of enthusiastic and committed staff who work very well together. They have a sound understanding of how children learn and make good use of all situations to extend the children's learning. The staff create a very calm welcoming environment where both children and parents are at home. The play leader, with the staff team, is responsible for the day to day planning and provision of the Foundation Stage. The planning is well written with accurate links to the areas of learning and good extensions. The play leader and staff team are clearly highly valued by the pre-school committee who are committed to actively supporting staff to continue their professional development.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide care and education.

Improvements since the last inspection

All recommendations set at the last inspection have been met. All policies and procedures are now complete and all records are regularly reviewed by the play leader and committee. All outdoor play is now planned within the daily planning and under each area of learning. A musically trained volunteer parent takes the children for regular music sessions. The play leader has introduced very good clear records of children's progress that are effectively shared with parents.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 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 records may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- carry out recommendations made under nursery education section

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 children with access to creative art and craft materials on a daily basis
- extend the range of information collected from parents about children's attainment on entry

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