

Longparish Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109902
Inspection date	06 December 2007
Inspector	Lorraine Wardlaw
Setting Address	Longparish Primary School, Longparish, Andover, Hampshire, SP11 6PB
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Registered person	The Trustees of Longparish Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of 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 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?

Longparish Playgroup first opened in 1988. The playgroup operates from a purpose built annexe attached to Longparish school in the village of Longparish, near Andover. It is managed by a voluntary committee, made up of parents. All children access a secure, enclosed outdoor area and have the use of the school playground. A maximum of 23 children may attend the playgroup at any one time and there are currently 35 children on roll, 18 of whom are funded to receive nursery education. The setting are able to support children with learning difficulties/disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Children come from a wide geographical area.

The playgroup operates term time only and is open each week day from 09:00 to 12:00 with a lunch club operating on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday until 12:45. Further sessions operate from 12:45 to 15:15 when the lunch club is operating, offering optional full day care to children who attend on those days. During the summer term a 'preparing for school' session operates from 12:00 to 15:15 on a Tuesday. The committee employs four staff, to work with the children, all of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children at the setting are learning to lead a healthy lifestyle; their nutritional health is promoted well through the provision of healthy snacks such as chopped, apple, carrot, cucumber and a plain biscuit. At lunch time children have the option of either bringing in their own packed lunch or having a hot, well balanced meal provided by the school. Children learn about where food comes from, by growing carrots, lettuce and potatoes in their small garden. They then cook and eat them for their snack such as when they have a potato snack time, children taste mashed potato, wedges, crisps and waffles. Children enjoy daily physical play; they skilfully pedal a tractor around the outside play space, exert their energy on the small trampoline and have the opportunity to climb on the challenging equipment. They have good opportunities to develop their fine motor skills; they cut with scissors, use pens and pencils at the writing table, manipulate clay with their fingers and use tools. Children demonstrate good hygiene routines; they know that they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating, to get rid of the germs. Staff teach children about germs by using glitter on their hands which they wash off. Children's health is safeguarded because staff are clear on their cleaning procedures, using different cloths for different tasks and know about those children with special dietary needs. Children are well protected when they have an accident or need medication because staff keep sound records. Those children who experience a bumped head receive sympathetic care and attention; they have a cuddle from the adult and a cold compress is held across their forehead.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for and play in an inviting and colourful environment, where staff have taken good precautions to ensure they stay safe. A secure and transparent door system is in place for the arrival and collection of children and for visitors which helps to ensure only authorised people enter the playgroup. Daily checks and regular, clear, risk assessments are carried out on all areas and on outings to reduce potential harm to children. For example, the garden toys are checked to see if they are in working order and either repaired or thrown away if not. Children tell the staff during whole group time of some of the safety rules such as 'no running'. They enjoy acting out how to stay safe on pavements and roads on 'beep beep day' during road safety week using role play resources such as a zebra crossing, traffic lights, a lollipop and wheeled toys in the school playground. Children take part in regular fire drills which ensures their safe evacuation in an emergency, but the procedure is not displayed for volunteers and visitors to view. Children are able to fully appreciate their art work because staff take time to display it on the walls, including themed friezes of favourite stories which parents help to draw. They can safely access a good selection of toys and resources, appropriate for their age or stage of development. Children are kept safe from possible harm or abuse because staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures; they have all accessed advanced training. The setting keeps a record of existing injuries to children and their child protection policy is up-to-date.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well at the playgroup; staff are sympathetic and caring towards children and pay particular attention to the child who is unsure of leaving their parent and gains their interest in an activity. Children are happy and enjoy choosing from the stimulating range of activities that are available to them in the child accessible and welcoming playroom. Some children concentrate well on their self chosen tasks, such as the child who confidently completes a simple computer programme unsupported by an adult or the young child who experiments in the bubbly water pouring skilfully from one container into another. Children enjoy lots of exciting extra curricular activities such as travelling on a mini bus together to a visit to the theatre to see 'Gruffalo' or to the local fire station to see real life 'superheros'.

Nursery Education.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Overall, staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of how children learn. They offer a practical, hands on environment where children enjoy a balanced range of exciting activities across all areas of learning. For example, they explore ice with small world figures on a builders tray and plant vegetable seeds in the garden. Overall, children are making sound progress through the stepping stones in most of the areas of learning with the exception of their personal social and emotional development where they make good progress. This is because there are missed opportunities by some of the staff to challenge and question children and staff are not yet fully confident and skilled in their teaching methods, which means that children's progress is inhibited. Staff have recently changed their planning, with the topics now coming from the children's interests such as 'superheros' or 'dinosaurs' and planned adult led, focus activities take place too. However, the adult led, focus activities do not closely link to the stepping stones nor are they systematically used in conjunction with assessment records. There are 'records of achievement' kept on children's progress, but these assessment records are not truly reflective of the capabilities of the children currently attending, nor are the notes on their progress and next steps complete. This means that staff can not easily use them when planning to meet children's individual progress.

Children engage easily in conversations with their peers and with the adults but the current teaching means that not all children are consistently encouraged to use language for thinking or able to find out the meaning of new words. They have opportunities to mark make on paper such as envelopes on the writing table and can recognise their names at registration time and on their home trays. Some are beginning to form recognisable letters but this is not consistently encouraged by the staff, given the ability of the children attending. Children are attentive listeners at story time and enjoy looking at books independently or with a friend questioning one another about the pictures. Children demonstrate an ability to count, can recognise shapes and numerals and often use mathematical language in their play. Such as when children play in the water they talk about having a 'full' jug or when playing with the connecting elephants they describe their size as big and small. Children have some opportunities to become aware of and solve simple number problems such as at registration time when some say confidently there are more boys in the group than girls. Some staff are able to extend and challenge children such as when a small group sits down with the adult to build a helicopter from a picture, they select the correct parts, count the number of parts they need for the top; four. One child finds one piece and is encouraged to say how many more he needs and says after a while 'three'. Together they build a recognisable helicopter, feel the air move as it is pushed around by the rotary blade and they are proud of their achievements. Children are developing a keen interest

in the computer and have excellent opportunities to learn about living things. The setting has a bird box and in the spring time children are able to see live on the computer the blue tits hatching because there is an in built camera. Children learn about the passing of time through the use of a sand timer and through gardening with a parent. They have opportunities to explore a variety of media and materials; different painting techniques are sometimes planned and children can freely choose to paint or chalk at the easel. Children quickly and easily learn new songs such as the 'Innkeeper', the 'Angels party' for the playgroup's nativity. When the music is put on during the play session children spontaneously start to sing and move their bodies to the music, smiling and laughing together and have fun. They then decide to move on to a ring game; without adult support a small group hold hands and say lets play 'farmers in his den'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's personal social and emotional development is promoted particularly well by the staff. Children have opportunities to speak during whole group time developing their confidence and self esteem and feel proud when they receive a sticker for the 'butterfly achievement' board. Overall, they demonstrate good behaviour, which is promoted by the playgroup's puppet 'Mr bear' who helps to keep playgroup happy. Children often work as a team on an activity, will negotiate with one another during role play or help others in need. For example, a child gets the Christmas tree shape for two children to collage and others wait patiently for the sand timer to show it is their turn on the computer, but at the same time give assistance to the child using the large mouse.

Those children who speak English as an additional language are made to feel very valued with their culture and language respected by everyone. Signs in their language are located around the playroom and children have simple Russian lessons by one of the mum's which also extends their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children who speak a dual language are encouraged during story time, to name an animal in the 'Gruffalo' story in both languages. The relationships the staff build with it's parents is very good; there is constant communication by the staff who are very approachable and friendly. Parents write very positively in the annual questionnaire about the playgroup and speak highly of the playgroup's flexible settling in process. Staff socialise with the parent, management committee who organise fundraising activities which involve the whole family. For example, sponsored walks, raffles and pancake races are on the yearly calendar. Good information is given to parents on care and education including an excellent website about all aspects of the playgroup. However, the setting's complaints policy does not include all the relevant details for parents. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being fostered.

Partnership with parents of children receiving nursery education is satisfactory. Parents are happy with their child's developmental progress through the stepping stones and can see their progress records every term, which are sent home. They can freely talk to the staff about their child's progress, because they feel comfortable to come into the group at any time; parents often help and share their knowledge and hobbies with the children such as leading cooking and music sessions. Staff begin to find out what children know and can do as they settle into the playgroup and through their anecdotal observations. However, there are not any systems in place to find out from parents, children's starting points with regards to their development in relation to the stepping stones of learning. This makes it difficult for staff to plan and build on what children already know and can do.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and benefit from a purpose built, well organised environment where staff work effectively as a team. Staff are committed and strive to improve their practice, by attending regular training courses on care and share information they independently gather at regular staff meetings. Space, staff and resources are organised to successfully promote most of the outcomes for children. A thorough recruitment procedure is in place, which ensures that newly employed staff are suitable to work with children. The setting operates good child to staff ratios which means that children are positively supported in their care. A suitable induction system is in place for new staff and good policies and procedures underpin practice. Record keeping with regards to children's care is up-to-date. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The new supervisor is a dedicated individual and works hard leading the staff team; she is very keen to improve the quality of nursery education and has good vision for the future. She has put new systems in place to evaluate and monitor the curriculum such as peer on peer observations and action sheets with targets to successfully move the nursery education provision forward. However, these systems have not, as yet, had sufficient time to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning that takes place at the playgroup. New planning is in place which all the staff contribute to and the supervisor is gaining in confidence with regards to the requirements of the Foundation Stage. All staff are keen to further their skills and knowledge through attending external training courses on the curriculum and complete annual self evaluations.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the playgroup have had a change of manager and therefore changes have taken place. At the last care inspection the setting were requested to develop the prospectus to include background information relating to the playgroup. This is now complete and parents can view the prospectus on the playgroup's website. The setting were also requested to review the organisation of snack time. Children now access a snack bar which is open during most of the session which allows children to have their snack at a time of their choosing and does not interrupt their flow of play. At the last education inspection the playgroup were requested to provide opportunities for children to be given time to finish and complete an activity before changes in the sessions occur. The setting reviewed the sessional routine and made changes which means that children are now able to spend good lengths of time at activity. The playgroup were also requested to develop a consistent assessment to include possible next steps in the children's development and learning. This has not fully been addressed and therefore this remains an area for future improvement. The final recommendation was to give sufficient detail on the daily activity sheets to identify what types of basic provision is available on a daily basis. The playgroup's written planning has been changed but it still requires clearer learning objectives linked to the stepping stones.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- update the complaints policy and ensure the fire drill is displayed

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):

- continue to monitor and develop staff teaching practices to ensure they can consistently and confidently question children and extend their learning through their play activities and during whole group teaching
- further develop adult initiated, focus planning to ensure it covers the stepping stones as learning intentions and is informed directly from the gaps in children's assessments
- ensure children's record of achievement reflects their capabilities and that details of their progress across all six areas and next steps are complete
- devise ways of finding out from parents children's starting points when they set out onto the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, so planning can be put into place to build on what children already know

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