

West End Play Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	122442
Inspection date	08 November 2007
Inspector	Joanna Scott
Setting Address	Village Hall, West End Lane, West End, Esher, Surrey, KT10 8LB
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Registered person	The Trustees of West End Play Group
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?

West End Playgroup has been operating since 1975. It is a committee run group and a registered charity. It is situated in West End, a village near Esher in Surrey. A maximum of 30 children may attend the setting at any one time. The playgroup operates five mornings a week from 09:30 to 12:30. The staff run a toddler group for children aged two, who attend with their parents or carers, on Thursday's from 13:00 to 14:45. This is mostly used by children who later attend the playgroup. Sessions operate during term time only.

The playgroup operate from the village hall, they have access to a large foyer which is used for messy play, the hall, kitchen, and toilet facilities. There is a small fully enclosed outdoor play area. The staff and children make regular use of public areas off site including the green, the pond, and an area of woodland. These areas do not form part of the registered premises.

There are currently 30 children aged from two and a half to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. Children mostly come from the local area. The playgroup supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language, and systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group employs six members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children play in an environment where their health is protected. The premises and resources are clean and well maintained. Children make links between hygiene and good health as they learn from an early age to wash their hands independently at key times, and understand why this is important. Staff take steps to maintain a healthy environment, for example they use disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies, and use anti-bacterial spray to clean the tables. These steps help minimize the risk of spreading infection. The health needs of the children are met, parental permissions and records are in place and some staff have the skills to administer first aid. All staff are observant and monitor children, for example using stickers to identify a child who has bumped their head, and ensuring they show no signs of illness as a result.

The children enjoy a range of healthy foods such as fresh fruit and sandwiches. They can self access water and snacks such as bread sticks during the session, which helps them to recognise their own needs. At group snack time they pour their own drinks, and are able to choose milk or water. This is a social occasion, and staff help children to learn to make healthy choices.

The children have daily opportunities to be active at the setting, and enjoy regular walks off site. In the outside play area they balance on low level beams, and negotiate trikes, scooters and steppers around the area with great skill. Some of the equipment is designed for two children, where some level of co-operation is required to manoeuvre successfully. These activities promote children's balance and co-ordination. Inside there are many opportunities for them to develop their fine motor skills as they use scissors, pencils, play dough tools and glue sticks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children play in a safe and secure environment. The staff ensure that the premises are well prepared and welcoming for the children before their arrival. They set out resources and activities ensuring there is a good range of experiences and opportunities for the children to choose from. Lots of examples of children's artwork is displayed in some areas of the building. Children are very familiar with the arrival and departure procedure, and separation from their parents and carers is managed safely. The security of the building is good, visitors have to ring a bell to gain access during operation. The outside play area is securely fenced and the gates closed and bolted when in use, however they are not always additionally secured. Staff supervise the children very well, and are deployed effectively.

The children are beginning to learn about keeping themselves safe. They have regular opportunities to take part in nature walks and pond dipping off site, and as part of these activities learn through experience and discussion how to cross a road safely. Inside they know not to run, and to put on peaked caps when playing with dry sand to protect their eyes. They are skilled at stopping if they hear a whistle blown, and listening to instruction during evacuation so that they are able to leave the building quickly and safely.

There are effective child protection procedures in place, which staff understand. This helps to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are happy and settled here. They enjoy the wide range of activities provided by the staff, and are interested by them and fully occupied in their play. The children generally separate from their parents and carers with ease, but any children needing additional encouragement or reassurance are well supported by staff. Children have plenty of opportunity to develop their independence as they help themselves to drinks when they are thirsty, prepare snack time for their peers, make their own sandwiches, and take an active role in tidy up time.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A manager takes over all responsibility for the planning of activities, with input from the staff who deliver them. The planning covers all areas of learning. Activities are interesting and stimulating which makes them appealing to children, such as making papier mache hot air balloons, and baking marmite wheels as part of a theme on fireworks. Staff extend children's learning through discussion. They make regular observations of children's achievements, which key workers record in their individual profiles. These show that children make good progress.

The children are very polite and kind to each other. They take turns, and share resources, often without prompting. They communicate well, and staff encourage children to listen to each other, for example giving them the opportunity to share their news at circle time, where they recall their experiences and use descriptive language. Children confidently talk about sounds, and recognise their names as they pick out their registration cards as they arrive, and their own cups at snack time. Children like to look at books in the book corner, and staff promote this by making themselves available to children to share their stories. Staff use resources such as large scale books and puppets at group time, for the children's enjoyment. Children have daily opportunities to practise their mark making and pencil control, and many children write or make representation of their name. Children confidently count and join in to find out how many children are present each morning. As children play staff regularly talk to them about mathematical concepts such as how many, more or less, size, shape and colour. Current art work is displayed which the children can take pride in, for example showing visitors which shape picture is theirs. However, the use of labelling and posters to stimulate and raise children's awareness is not evident throughout the inside or outside play areas.

The children have excellent opportunities to explore the natural world. The playgroup go out on weekly nature walks off site which enables children to have first hand experience of the changing seasons and life cycles. They learn through topic work about their community, for example "people who help us", and the wider world through celebrations of cultural festivals. This helps children build positive attitudes.

Children enjoy many opportunities to be creative as they take part in art and craft activities, imaginative and themed role play, music and movement, and use materials such as clay and dough. They learn how things work, for example they use tools under close supervision for wood work. Their physical skills are developed as they learn to control their bodies and movement as they play and learn.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children are kind, co-operative, and show concern for each other. They greet their peers and the staff warmly. Children compliment each other on their achievements, for example when drawing a picture or writing their name. Staff provide opportunities for children to take turns and share throughout the sessions. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. The children behave very well, and are busily occupied in their play. There is a clear policy which promotes positive reinforcement, which all staff follow. The staff are clear communicators, and observant of the children so that they are able to divert or re-direct children to ensure they are happily occupied. They are skilled at promoting wanted behaviour, and the children receive much praise and encouragement during the sessions, for example for remembering to wash their hands before eating, for creating a picture, or for sharing their news with their friends. Children learn about their local community and the wider world. Staff deliver planned topic work, and a range of resources are accessible to them which promote diversity such as books, small world figures and dressing up clothes. However, there are not always pictures and posters displayed to stimulate conversation or build awareness. Staff ask parents about children's individual needs, so that they can meet them. Systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents and staff share information about the children's care and development. Information is provided on a daily basis about the activities the children take part in. Staff invite parents in formally each year to focus on their child's development and identify next steps, and there are opportunities for parents to do this more frequently if they wish to. Parents are invited to sit on the management committee, and to join the group on their weekly nature walks off site. Staff also invite parents on more social occasions. Newsletters are provided regularly, and are informative and interesting. Parents say that they are informed about their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are happy and settled here. Families are often familiar with the playgroup before their children start because they have already attended the toddler group run by the staff on Thursday afternoons. Staff organise the environment well, demonstrating effective team work in setting the provision up before the children's arrival, and ensuring that a good range of resources are accessible. Children have plenty of space to move and play. Staff are deployed well which ensures that children are supervised, and enables staff to interact with them and extend their play. Appropriate procedures are in place to cover staff absence, ensuring that staffing ratios are consistently met and children are supported. Staff have the opportunity to extend their skills and knowledge through training.

The leadership and management are good. The committee take an active role in the management of the playgroup. Day to day operation is the responsibility of the two managers, and their staff team. Systems are in place for the recruitment, induction, appraisal and development of suitable staff. The group monitor and assess their provision, and have taken part in the accreditation for the Pre-School Learning Alliance. This demonstrates that they are proactive in development. The group's policies and procedures are shared with staff and parents, although not all have been reviewed and updated. All required documentation is in place and well maintained. 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, two recommendations were raised. Firstly they were asked to amend the complaints procedure to accurately reflect the contact details of the regulator. Ofsted contact details are correct so that parents are able to make contact with the regulators should they wish to. Secondly they were asked to keep a record of staff details on site. These are kept secure, on site, and are accessible to staff.

At the last nursery education inspection two points for consideration were made. Firstly they were asked to develop the opportunities for children to freely express themselves through activities such as model making and collage. These activities are provided, in line with planning. Children have regular opportunities to use materials such as play dough, clay, scissors, tape and glue or junk modelling. Secondly they were asked to continue to develop the curriculum planning to include the rotation of activities and the identification of their learning aims and outcomes. The planning is in the process of review, but includes rotation of activities. Learning aims and outcomes are discussed with the staff team delivering the activities, so are identified. However, they are not always clearly recorded on the planning sheets. This is an area being developed by the manager.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 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.

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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):

- continue to update policies in line with current practice, and share this information with parents
- review and/or combine any risk assessment and operational procedures to ensure that staff, volunteers, and parents are clear about the security of the gates in the outside play area, and the pond dipping activity

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 further labelling and visual displays throughout the provision, to provide further stimulation, for the children's enjoyment, and to extend their learning and awareness

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