

Invicta Park Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127276
Inspection date	27 February 2008
Inspector	Susan Jennifer Scott
Setting Address	The Craig Centre, Invicta Park Barracks, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 2NA
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Registered person	Invicta Park Pre-School Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Invicta Park Playgroup opened in 1994 and operates from two rooms in an army barracks community building. It is situated on an army barracks site in Maidstone, Kent. A maximum of 50 children between two and eight years old may attend the playgroup and play scheme at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:30 to 12:15, term times only. In the final two terms of their academic year there is a lunch club for those about to start school until 13:30. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 24 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the army quarters on site. No children currently attend with learning difficulties or disabilities, though a large number of children who speak English as an additional language attend.

The playgroup employs six staff and two relief staff. Four are qualified and another is completing the appropriate early years qualification and one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children access the outdoor environment, enjoying vigorous physical play on a regular and frequent basis. They show good co-ordination when steering, pedalling and using the bikes and cars. The gymnasium is also used to enable children to use the balancing and climbing equipment inside along with items such as balls and tunnels which boost their skills.

Children benefit from a variety of healthy food and drink at snack times when they choose from food such as vegetables, fruit or toast. Staff use safe systems to ensure that all food and drink complies with parental instructions and children's preferences, enabling them to have confidence in the choices offered. Children benefit from the social opportunities offered to them at snack times when they sit in their key person groups at small tables. Staff promote the use individual mats and bowls for snacks which reinforces children's understanding of healthy eating habits. Children are encouraged to pour themselves a drink during this routine and can help themselves to, or request a drink of water whenever they feel thirsty. This encourages them to develop healthy habits and promotes their independence.

Children benefit from secure routines and activities that enable them to learn the importance of good hygiene and healthy living. For example, the current topic of healthy foods as part of the theme 'Our senses' is reinforced through the snacks and discussion during the vegetable printing and colouring activities. Children independently engage in hand washing before eating and after they have been playing. Staff take frequent opportunities to reinforce children's understanding of hygiene by encouraging the use of tissues. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate and are able to administer first aid in the event of an accident. This ensures children's welfare in the event of an accident when parents and emergency contacts are not available. There are clear records which protect children who need to take medication, although the insurance policy has not been checked with reference to the storage or administration of this yet.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and settle well at this secure and welcoming setting. The pegs provided for their coats enable them to feel a sense of belonging and they benefit from using the warm and spacious environment. There are plentiful pictures and posters displayed and their work is gradually being displayed. This shows that staff value and encourage children's contributions. Children have easy and safe access to a good range of toys and resources appropriate for their age and stage of development. Resources are used well by staff to meet the needs of the children; for example, there is a system to ensure resources are varied each session. Toys and resources are carefully selected and regularly checked to ensure they are safe and suitable for children to use.

Children benefit from very good security of the premises which ensures they are unable to leave without a suitable adult. They enjoy their play in a safe environment where staff are vigilant at all times. Children's understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency is supported by regular emergency evacuations which are practised and recorded. Staff promote children's safety effectively, for example, the children have a clear procedure for going to the gym and to the outdoor play area to support their awareness of safety. High

staff ratios ensure children are protected and emergencies are covered. Staff have an understanding of child protection procedures as they have participated in training which enables them to safeguard children's welfare. The policy is available to parents to help them understand the role the group have in protecting children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The staff accurately assesses the developmental stages of children using the Birth to three matters framework and use interesting and appealing activities to enable them to progress. As a result, the youngest children enjoy a good range of experiences that are well suited to their stage of development. There are brief initial profiles of the development new children completed on entry which are used to build on their learning and progress. Children have good conversations with the staff, who respond with challenging questions that encourage them to talk about themselves. Staff explain some of the activities to children who have previously been able to use a pictorial representation to understand the sequence of routines within the session which enables them to make informed decisions about their play.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. They plan activities to interest and stimulate the children's learning. The programme covers all areas of learning and effectively build children's individual skills by providing interesting and appealing activities. Planning includes good opportunities to extend the learning of the older and more able children. Staff extend children's knowledge by encouraging new skills and building on previous learning successfully. Good organisation allows staff to teach the children through practical experiences and they encourage the children to explore freely chosen activities. Children are supported effectively through the use of the attractive resources and activities.

Staff provide a secure, nurturing and supportive environment which builds on children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are motivated to learn and show good levels of concentration. They confidently access resources independently and try new activities, such as the supermarket set up in the home corner. Children's behaviour is very good; they are well mannered and eager to help each other.

Children, who mostly speak English as an additional language, are learning to speak with confidence and listen well when conversing with each other and adults. They enjoy sharing books with each other in the book corner and participate in lively discussions based on stories read to them by staff. Children are learning to recognise their names and different texts and print as staff give good priority to learning about sounds and print, for example, when they talk about, or write their names on work.

Children are learning to count and to recognise numerals during small group activities and daily routines. However, they do not consistently benefit from practical application of mathematical skills such as counting the number of children present, or how many cups are used at snack times. This results in irregular opportunities to build on these skills by solving simple problems using basic addition and subtraction processes. However, children enjoy developing their understanding of addition and subtraction when singing familiar number songs.

Children enthusiastically develop their design skills, for example, when building houses from wooden bricks. They relish opportunities to experience activities in the outside environment which is used to enable children to explore the varied play and learning opportunities such as studying of insects. Regular opportunities to use varied and stimulating equipment ensures children develop their fine motor skills well, for example, through craft, painting, and construction activities. Children learn about the importance of personal hygiene and healthy eating through daily routines, discussing the topic about healthy food.

Children clearly enjoy the opportunities provided in role play as they use their imaginations and express their ideas. For example, they enthusiastically experiment with paint effects as they complete prints using vegetables. Staff stimulate children's creativity as they experiment with a variety of role play situations; for example, organising a supermarket for them to use. Children are encouraged to explore and investigate sounds through music and they enjoy singing from their repertoire of songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from an extensive range of resources reflecting positive images such as poster, charts, pictures and toys. These promote a balanced view of society and reflect the identity of the community. Staff are fully aware of the individual needs and preferences of all the children and work hard to nurture their abilities. For example, they incorporate a variety of festival celebrations into their planning to support inclusion. Staff pay very good attention to the children and value all the contributions and achievements. This ensures they have good confidence and self esteem and enables children to develop an awareness of their own needs and an understanding of the needs of others.

Children are encouraged to feel secure and to trust the staff as there are procedures in place to ensure their individual needs or learning difficulties and /or, disabilities are well catered for. For example, the children's individual needs are respected and catered for through the assessment and planning procedures. Children with English as an additional language are welcomed into the setting and staff use very sensitive methods to enable their development. Children play harmoniously together and respond positively to staff. They have relaxed relationships with staff who have clear expectations of behaviour and make their expectations explicit. For example, children's good behaviour and sharing is encouraged through the use of the two or five minute rule which the children understand applies to sharing toys. The children genuinely enjoy being at the playgroup and this is reflected in their high spirits which express humour and enjoyment. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. All parents are welcomed into the setting and given good information on the routines and activities; some of this information is translated for parents who do not speak fluent English. Parents have excellent opportunities to discuss their children's progress with the their child's key-person and other staff. Thorough information is exchanged when new children are registered to ensure children are cared for according to parents' wishes. An initial assessment of children's development is completed by parents and discussed with the staff who continue to provide opportunities to discuss their children's progress and achievements. Parents can access contact books regularly and their contributions are sought by staff who value their knowledge of their child. Staff work in a close partnership to enable children's development; for example, children benefit from the sensitive attitude of staff to toilet training. Good information is given to parents which supports home and playgroup

links, such as suggestions to develop children's skills and understanding. This enables children to feel a sense of belonging and develop confidence in the staff and the programme.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The registered provider and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and provide good support for the children. Children are protected by procedures for vetting and employing appropriately qualified staff.

Induction training, policies and procedures are well thought through and effective in keeping children healthy and safeguarding their welfare. The measures to monitor the provision and improve practice are successful. For example, children experience good quality play and learning because staff are continually training and building upon their knowledge of good practice.

Children's welfare and individual needs are supported by the group who have reliable and thorough records in place. The required documentation is all in place. Records are kept confidentially maintaining the child's privacy. Children and parents benefit from clear and understood policies and procedures. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. Children benefit from a strong staff team who share common aims. Staff work closely together to ensure the effective delivery of the programme and experience good support and guidance from the manager, enabling them to be clear about their roles and responsibilities. The staff use the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage as well as the Birth to three framework to plan and provide a well balanced curriculum. Children benefit from assessments of how well their needs are met because staff monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education. Staff have excellent relationships with parents and very good interaction with the children. The committee supports the progress of the group and work closely with the staff to provide a well resourced and effective playgroup.

Improvements since the last inspection

Children now benefit from a majority of qualified staff and there is an effective procedure for deputising. There are clear procedures for appointing new staff. Children benefit from ongoing review and up-dating of the playgroup's policies and procedures.

Children now have more opportunities to self-select from the resources available and staff endeavour to provide opportunities for children to choose from some books and toys which are stored. Children's next steps are identified and this information is used to plan for their learning and progress.

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 can be seen 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):

- review procedures for the administration of medication with reference to the insurance policy

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):

- develop opportunities for children to experience mathematics through practical 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