

Little Duckling Playgroups

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	130750
Inspection date	05 December 2007
Inspector	Christine McInally
Setting Address	Hangleton Community Centre Upper Hall, Harmsworth Crescent, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 8BW
Telephone number	01273 248532
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Registered person	Little Duckling Playgroups
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Little Ducklings Playgroups opened in 1999. It operates from Hangleton Community Centre, Hove. The facility is located in one hall on the first floor and has access to the soft play area and one further room on the ground floor. A garden is available for outside play. The setting serves the local and surrounding community. They are registered to care for 24 children aged two - five years. There are currently 40 children on roll, of these 24 are in receipt of funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:45 to 15:15. A day session from 09:15 to 15:15 is also available. Three full-time, and one part-time member of staff work with the children. Over half the staff hold a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from CEYC (City Early Years and Childcare) and takes part in QUILT (Quality in Learning and Teaching) a quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet their physical, nutritional and health needs. Staff wear disposable gloves when serving food or changing nappies. Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene and understand why they need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating food. Good arrangements are in place for dealing with sickness and accidents minimising the risk of the spread of infection.

Children have sufficient opportunities to enjoy physical exercise both indoors and out. They enjoy participating in parachute games and help to design the obstacle course, where they learn to balance, jump and negotiate around objects. A stimulating variety of activities helps children gain increasing control of their bodies for example, as they pour drinks for themselves or as they build using construction toys.

Children enjoy using the snack bar style system to help themselves to refreshment during the session at a time that suits them. They experience a range of healthy snacks including fresh and dried fruit encouraging them to develop healthy eating practices. While parents provide packed lunches for the children staff demonstrate a good understanding of healthy eating practices. However, staff do not consistently sit with the children at snack or lunch time. Consequently opportunities are missed to chat informally about what they are eating.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment. They are able to develop a good sense of belonging through the warm, child friendly accommodation. Children's art work is attractively displayed, with equipment and activities set out before they arrive. Children are warmly welcomed as they enter the setting, having individual, named pegs for their coats which further promotes their sense of belonging. Children enjoy their play in an extremely safe environment where staff are vigilant and use risk assessments extremely well to reduce potential hazards.

Children begin to learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe as they practise fire evacuation procedures. They learn about safety through staff's clear and simple explanations as to why a rule is in place, for example they know not to run inside, as they might fall and hurt themselves.

Children are safeguarded by staff that have a clear understanding of child protection policies and procedures. There is a clearly written policy which is shared with the parents. All of these measures contribute to the safety and welfare of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the playgroup; they readily approach staff for support indicating good trusting relationships. Children arrive happy and eager to participate, enjoying their time at the playgroup. The playgroup operates a free play session which means children

are able to select their own activities. Staff are accomplished in extending children's learning and they are extremely well motivated by the challenges set throughout the day. They achieve well because staff are skilled and use their understanding of early years guidance, such as Birth to three matters and the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage, to provide good quality care and education. Children show considerable independence and make choices about the toys and resources they want to play with. A wide range of appropriate resources and activities effectively promotes children's development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones. As a result, children enjoy a range of stimulating and interesting activities and experiences. A worthwhile range of relevant activities related to their needs motivates children. They access a wide range of well-chosen resources, which support their progress across all areas of learning. Planning is good, links clearly to the stepping stones and ensures a good range of activities and experiences are provided to extend children's learning. Children flourish as the balance between adult and child-led activities allows them to learn at their own pace. Staff observe the children during free play and focussed activities using their notes to assess children's achievements. This information is beginning to be used to plan the next steps in each child's learning.

Children are happy, confident and interested in the activities offered. They are developing an awareness of others needs and have good self-esteem because staff listen to them and value their ideas and contributions. Children communicate with confidence and respond well to the staff's open ended questions. They are beginning to recognise their first names; this is supported through the use of name pegs, for their coats, and as children collect their name to use the 'café' at snack time. They enjoy listening to stories and readily access the book corner where they 'read' to themselves. They are beginning to understand the idea of writing for a purpose as they play in the 'shop' writing shopping lists. They use and develop their knowledge and understanding of numbers, position, size and shape during planned activities and daily routines. They choose number activities during free play and enjoy number rhymes and songs.

Topic work and practical activities arouses children's natural curiosity and develops their exploration and investigation skills. Children are confident in using information and communication technology. They demonstrate good mouse control when playing games on the computer and use the telephone confidently during role-play. Children use a range of small tools when playing with the play dough; they use pens and pencils effectively and hold them correctly. Children move confidently showing a good awareness of space. They enjoy opportunities to use the fixed play equipment in the outdoor play area. Children express themselves creatively using all of their senses to actively explore a stimulating range of new experiences, such as, exploring the feeling of the 'gloop'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are greeted warmly by staff who ask how they are and what they have been doing at home. This helps them feel secure and develop a sense of belonging. Children are encouraged to select their own activities, learning to make their own decisions. Staff are highly aware of children's individual needs and work with parents to ensure they are met. They work with parents and other agencies to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ensuring all children are fully involved in the playgroup. Good use of visual symbols helps

bilingual children develop an understanding of the playgroup routines. Children are developing an awareness of their own and other cultures through a range of resources, planned activities and as they celebrate a variety of festivals.

Children behave very well are polite and display good manners. They use words such as, 'please, thank you and excuse me' showing respect and kindness to other children and adults alike. Staff develop good relationships with children and praise them effectively for their positive behaviour. For example, when children share toys and equipment staff tell them they are kind and thank them. This helps children to feel valued and makes them feel good about themselves. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Positive relationships are established with parents through the welcoming approach of the staff and the effective involvement of parents on the committee and as helpers. Parents receive good information on the activities provided and the Foundation Stage; they can also access more detailed information on the playgroup web site. Staff are friendly and approachable they ensure that all parents know how their children are progressing and developing. Children's learning is enhanced from this sharing of information between staff and parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by efficient and effective organisation. Good use is made of the space within the playgroup to support children's learning, with the premises being securely maintained to protect children. Knowledgeable and qualified staff fully understand and follow the setting's comprehensive policies and procedures, promoting children's well-being. Staff constantly interact with children, giving effective support and encouragement which helps children to feel secure and confident within the playgroup.

Leadership and management is good. There are systems in place to monitor and evaluate the funded nursery education. Staff and committee members are very aware of their differing roles and responsibilities and work well together. Staff work well as a team and clear communication and guidance allows them to provide a stimulating well-balanced programme. There are regular appraisals that identify training needs and staff are encouraged to enrol on relevant courses. This supports staff in their role and ensures they have the latest and most relevant information available. All aspects of the children's care and learning are discussed with the parents, who are kept well informed of their child's achievements. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation was made relating to children's access to hot and cold running water. This has been addressed and children are able to wash their hands as and when necessary, developing their independence.

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 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):

- improve the organisation of snack and lunch time to allow more meaningful adult interaction with the children

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 develop the use of assessment records to help inform the planning for children's individual next stage of learning

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