

Littlemore Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	134012
Inspection date	13 December 2007
Inspector	Margaret Davie
Setting Address	Giles Road, Littlemore, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX4 4NL
Telephone number	01865 396449
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Registered person	Littlemore 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?

Littlemore Playgroup was registered in 1992 and has been in existence for over 30 years. It is run by a committee of parents and operates from one large room in a community centre building in Littlemore on the edge of Oxford. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30 during school term time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 23, aged from three to under five years, on roll, who attend for a variety of sessions. All of these receive funding for early education. Children come from the Littlemore, Rose Hill and Cowley areas. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs four members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The playgroup receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop good personal hygiene habits because good systems are in place to remind them of the need to wash their hands regularly to prevent the spread of germs. Washrooms are fitted with soap dispensers and air hand dryers to prevent cross infection. The premises are very clean and staff ensure surfaces are regularly wiped with disinfectant to minimise the spread of any infection.

Children receive good care in the event of an illness or accident because staff are properly trained to deal with emergencies. Children's health records are up to date and accident and medication records are properly shared with parents in order to maintain continuity of care.

Children enjoy nutritious snacks such as wholemeal toast with a choice of spread and a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable. They help themselves to a drink of water whenever they are thirsty and are offered a healthy drink of water or milk at snack time. Snack time is very sociable with all the children sitting together at the tables, chatting with their friends and staff.

Children develop very good physical skills. The garden is set up as an outdoor classroom, and this affords children the opportunity to develop all areas of learning in the fresh air. They develop their sense of space when riding wheeled toys on the track, balance while walking across a low beam and crawl through a large plastic tunnel. They develop their small muscles, digging in the garden when planting fruit and vegetables and use a range of tools both indoors and outdoors such as small hammers, pens, brushes, glue sticks and scissors. Children greatly enjoy opportunities to move to music, dancing to simple tunes indoors and playing a range of small instruments during keep fit sessions outside.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play comfortably in a suitable environment. Good security procedures are in place to ensure there is no unauthorised entry or exit. A range of toys and equipment set out in the large main room and outside in the garden enables children to choose what they want to play with and access it themselves. Children are stimulated and challenged by experiences the resources provide. For example, they love playing with the dressing up clothes and watch with fascination as a child is transformed into a fairy. Toys and resources are safe because they are checked regularly to ensure they are suitable for children to play with.

The garden is fully enclosed and is therefore safe for children to explore the wide range of equipment that is suited to their needs and ages. For example, they ride on a range of wheeled toys, write and stamp letters in the post office and play with a variety of small equipment in the large sand box. The garden is beautifully presented with a view to appealing to young children and provides many opportunities for them to learn about plants, insects and other small creatures.

The premises are welcoming and regularly checked for cleanliness and safety. However, the fire extinguishers have not been serviced recently, nor have small electrical equipment and other appliances been safety checked, which presents a risk to children's safety.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff attend regular training in matters of child protection and demonstrate a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. However, the playgroup does not have up to date Local Safeguarding Children Boards contact details available, which may cause a delay in reporting a concern about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and well settled at the playgroup. They involve themselves in activities quickly when they arrive and go about routines with growing confidence. They learn to become independent and gain self confidence through making choices in a positive environment. For example, children have free choice to any of the toys and activities, and can choose to play indoors or outdoors in accordance with their own preferences.

Children develop good relationships with staff and one another and learn to negotiate and take turns sensibly when sharing resources. Staff take time to chat with children about what they are doing and ask questions to extend their thinking. The atmosphere in the playgroup is calm and settled, children enjoy going about their routines to soft background music and watching the relaxing water feature when taking part in group time. Children develop a good level of self-esteem because staff listen to them carefully and regularly praise and encourage them. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make overall good progress in their learning because they are supported by staff with a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning. They provided varied and interesting experiences to promote children's development in all areas. For example, an outing to a nearby centre helps to prepare children for the festive Christmas period. Children's learning is well supported by regular formal and informal observations, which helps to identify what they know and whether there are any gaps in their learning. This ensures they make appropriate progress toward the early learning goals.

Children's learning benefits from good adult support. For example, a member of staff intervenes very positively with a group of children who build a small model railway. She talks to them about going on trips and links this to any trips they have been on with their families. Finally, she gets out the globe and shows children where they are in relation to where they have been on their holidays. This very good interaction supports their learning well.

Children develop good personal, social and emotional skills. Activities such as group time discussions with the aid of glove puppets, helps them to identify and understand a range of emotions from facial expressions. Children play cooperatively with other children, sharing resources or dancing with each other to lively music. They learn to wait their turn at snack time and enjoy spreading their toast with a choice of toppings and pouring their own drinks. This helps them learn to take responsibility and have consideration for others.

Children explore and investigate materials such as a big block of ice, use simple technology such as a CD player and learn mouse control and typing skills using the playgroup's computer. They cut, glue and decorate Christmas cards for their families and enjoy modelling with play dough and working with small tools on the workbench. Children count from one to five and beyond when they sing simple counting songs and calculate one more and less when working out the number of currant buns in the baker's shop. Resources are well labelled and children

learn to recognise their own names when they get their name card and place it on the table at snack time. Children enjoy listening to stories and are lively speakers, however, their speaking and listening skills in focused activities are not as well developed as they could be. As a result, they are not always getting as much out of activities as possible.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well known to staff, who treat them all as individuals and with equal concern. Parents are asked for detailed information about their child's needs when they first start, to ensure staff can give a high level of care. For example, information about how well they respond to new children and adults, as well as any words they use to describe their personal needs, ensures children can be helped to settle quickly and confidently. Children with learning difficulties make appropriate progress because staff have a clear understanding of their specific needs and give them additional support in line with information gathered from parents and outside agencies. Children with special needs have individual education plans which are regularly assessed and reviewed to ensure their targets are appropriate. Children who speak English as an additional language make similar progress because staff give them extra adult support to help them take a full part in playgroup life. Staff regularly use sign language when speaking with children, in order to help those whose language is still developing to understand and make themselves understood.

Children's behaviour is good. Consistent support and explanations by staff helps them to understand the difference between right and wrong and learn to take responsibility for their own actions. Children are gently reminded to remember their manners and are learning good table habits, such as not putting their knives in their mouths, by the positive role models provided by staff during snack time. Children are developing positive attitudes to a range of cultures because they learn about major festivals from around the world and play with resources that reflect people from different backgrounds, however, there are few resources to reflect diversity to help them develop positive attitudes to a range of needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery education is good and impacts positively on children's learning. Parents are given information about the Foundation Stage and topic work, so that they can involve themselves in their children's learning if they wish. Parents are also warmly welcomed to help out in the playgroup. The playgroup's welcome booklet outlines aims and expectations, as well as all policies and procedures to promote children's continuity of care. However, the contact details for the regulator, contained in the complaints policy, are not up to date. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed and a formal parents evening is held to give them the opportunity to meet with staff to discuss their child's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children play and learn in an environment that is well organised for their care. Space is used well, allowing children to play safely and move around freely both indoors and outdoors. Staff are suitably qualified and show a good understanding of how to support and care for children, ensuring they make good progress in all areas of development and learning. Children benefit

from a good mix of independent and adult led play and domestics are well organised to ensure there is always a good level of adult support.

All required documentation is in place to ensure children receive good care and ratios are always observed. Attendance records are kept and accident and medication records are signed by parents to ensure children's continuity of care. However, children's health and safety is potentially at risk because the playgroup staff have not satisfied themselves that the owners of the premises have conducted safety checks on fire extinguishers, small electrical and other equipment, to ensure their safety; nor do they have contact details in line with Local Safeguarding Children Boards available.

Leadership and management of nursery education is good. Staff work well as a team to monitor and improve teaching and learning and to support each other's development. The manager provides a strong role model and positive guidance for other staff, with a clear aim to improving outcomes for children. Children are provided with a broad range of experiences and activities to help them make good progress in all areas of learning; however, children have insufficient planned opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. The playgroup meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the playgroup was asked to ensure all policies are accurate and relevant before they are adopted and to update the complaints procedure and child protection policy to ensure they include full contact details. To ensure children's welfare is protected the playgroup has adopted a rolling programme of policy review to ensure they remain accurate and relevant. Appropriate contact details are contained within relevant policies, however, the playgroup does not have the most recent Local Safeguarding Children Boards contact details to ensure there is no delay in contacting the appropriate authorities, should staff have a concern about a child in their care. The complaints policy contains the correct address for the regulator; however, the telephone number is out of date.

The playgroup was also asked to improve the use of observation records and children's profiles to provide a more accurate record of children's rate of progress. Children's rate of progress is more accurately reflected in assessment records because the playgroup has changed the way in which profiles are updated. Staff are now allocated time in which to update children's records, samples of work are dated and the system for updating profiles has been improved to make the rate of progress more obvious. This helps to ensure children are making expected gains in their learning.

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):

- ensure fire extinguishers, electrical equipment and other appliances are regularly checked for safety
- obtain contact numbers in line with Local Safeguarding Children Boards procedures

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):

- improve children's access to planned activities which develop their speaking and listening skills

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