

Startrite Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 136087 |
| Inspection date | 17 January 2008 |
| Inspector | Samantha Powis |
| Setting Address | Little Stoke Youth Centre, Little Stoke Lane,, Little Stoke, South Glos, BS34 6HY |
| Telephone number | 07891 930727 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Startrite Pre School 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 satisfactory. 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?

Start-Rite Pre-School Playgroup is managed by a voluntary committee, made up of parents of children at the group and members of the local community. It opened in 1963, and operates from two rooms in the youth centre. Children also have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The group is situated in a residential area of Little Stoke in South Gloucestershire. Children attend from the local area.

The group is open during term time only. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 09:00 to 15:00 and Monday and Friday from 09:00 to 12:30. Children attend for a variety of sessions. They are registered to care for up to 22 children, there are currently 17 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these 17 children receive funding for nursery education. The group supports children who have learning difficulties or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

Four staff, including the manager, work directly with the children. Three staff hold appropriate early years qualifications, one member of staff is currently working towards a qualification. The

group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance, and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is satisfactorily maintained. They learn about effective personal hygiene routines, as they are reminded to wash their hands before they have a snack and after using the toilet. However, sometimes, children wash their hands in the same bowl of water, which does not fully prevent the risk of germs being spread. Documents such as the accident record are used appropriately to support children's ongoing health. Staff are able to deal with any minor injuries as most are first aid trained and have access to an adequately stocked first aid kit. A policy regarding the exclusion of children with any infectious illness is adhered to in practice, helping to prevent cross infection.

Children benefit from being offered generally healthy snacks, and information is provided to parents to encourage them to send in healthy options in children's lunch boxes. Individual dietary needs are known to staff who ensure these are respected. Children enjoy engaging in physical activities on a daily basis. The group make good use of the secure outdoor play space and the large hall to encourage children to be physically active. They talk to the children about how exercise affects their body, such as listening to their hearts beating faster, which reminds them of the benefits of exercising.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are kept safe through effective routines and practices being followed. All areas are checked to ensure they are suitable for use each day. Children are familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures as these are practised frequently. A suitable range of toys and equipment are available for the children's use. Security is given high priority, all exits are securely closed to ensure that children cannot leave and unwanted visitors cannot gain entry, therefore, keeping the children safe. Children are supervised well at all times, by staff who have undergone appropriate checks and vetting. A record of visitors is maintained, however, the daily record of attendance is not effective in accurately recording the times of children's attendance.

Children's ongoing safety is supported as staff have a secure understanding of child protection procedures. They are familiar with signs and symptoms and of who to contact should they have a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled at the group. They develop friendships with their peers and relate well to the staff. They feel valued and included, as their individual needs are respected. They feel secure within the familiar daily routines and the consistent expectations of staff. Children benefit from having access to both indoor and outdoor play space, which is organised appropriately to meet their needs throughout the day.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff use some useful methods to support children's learning. On a one-to-one basis, some effective use of questioning encourages children's thinking and learning. However, at times, activities are not very interesting or stimulating to harness the children's interest fully. Children are busy and have opportunities to organise their own play. This is due to many of the resources being freely accessible to them. Some basic planning is in place, to ensure children are offered experiences throughout all six areas of learning. However, the activities are not evaluated to allow staff to monitor their effectiveness in supporting children's learning. Adequate systems are in place to observe and record children's progress, however, these are not always effectively used to ensure appropriate challenge is offered to each child.

Children are confident and are developing a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are beginning to develop secure friendships, and seek out others to join in their play. They are learning to concentrate, and listen and watch well as a member of staff uses the puppet theatre to tell the story about the three bears. They enjoy books, and can often be seen in the comfortable book area having a look at a book by themselves. They understand about how books work, holding them the correct way and turning the pages from front to back. Children are not actively encouraged to engage in mark making. Although writing materials are available, staff do not promote children's use of these.

Children confidently use numbers as they play. The children using the play dough make a birthday cake, using pasta as candles. They count seven candles on the cake, before blowing them out and singing the happy birthday song. When using board games, staff encourage the children to use simple problem solving. For example, they count how many more moves they need to make to get their snail to the finish line. Children enjoy using a range of commercially produced construction equipment to build large towers and tracks. They have access to equipment such as calculators and CD players, building their confidence in using ICT resources. Children enjoy painting, however, at times sufficient equipment, such as aprons, are not available to allow all the children to join in. Singing time is popular with the children. They sing along with the staff their favourite rhymes, often using the actions as well. Children have some access to musical instruments to learn about the different sounds they make.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel a secure sense of belonging. This is due to staff having a sound understanding of their individual needs. They learn about the local community in which they live, as they visit the local school and have visitors in to see them. Resources and activities help them to understand the wider world. For example, the children enjoy a story about the experiences of different children around the world, often recognising parts of their own cultures within the story. This helps them to feel valued. The wishes of individual families are discussed to ensure preferences are respected. There are appropriate procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Staff work alongside parents and other professionals, where appropriate, to support children's needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are polite and generally well behaved. This is due to staff supporting them in learning to share and take turns and encouraging them to say please and thank you as part of daily routines. Partnerships with parents and carers are satisfactory. Effective relationships are established with parents. They are made to feel welcome and feel comfortable to talk to staff about their child's needs. Some basic information is provided to support parents in understanding

the policies and procedures followed by the setting to promote children's health and well-being. Regular newsletters inform them about events and information about the committee. Parents are made aware of the records that staff keep to monitor their child's development. Although they are reminded that they can see these records at any time. However, there are no formal opportunities arranged for this information to be shared, to help both parents and staff to work more closely to better support children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children enjoy the support of staff who are keen to meet their needs. They feel settled and relaxed in the safe play space available. Staff ratios ensure children are well supervised at all times. Overall, practices and procedures support children's health and safety. A record is kept of children's attendance, this does not include accurate times to fully support children's safety. This is a breach of regulations. Other documentation is generally used appropriately to support children's welfare, and effective consideration is given to ensuring personal information remains confidential. The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly formed committee have a developing understanding of their role, and work hard to support staff in meeting the children's needs and building relationships with parents. They seek guidance from outside professionals to support them in following effective practices to support children's care needs. However, there are no systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum in supporting children's learning, which leads at times to children not receiving sufficient challenge. There are no formal system of appraisal for staff, to identify strengths or training needs to enable them to develop their own skills to better support the needs of children in their care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure the contents of the first aid box met current requirements and plan for children to belong to a key group. To improve the nursery education they were asked to provide further opportunities to encourage children to be independent, develop the challenges set for children through planning and development records, provide parents with more information about the curriculum and their child's activities and rotate the use of resources to develop mathematical skills, enjoyment of music and encourage children to observe the effects of physical activity on their bodies.

The first aid kit contains a basic selection of resources which enable staff to deal with a minor injury. The kit is checked regularly to ensure the contents are appropriate. Staff have recently introduced key worker groups, which helps them in supporting children's individual needs.

Children's independence is encouraged when they put their coats on to go out to play, however, staff do not always encourage children to be independent when labelling their own work, often writing children's names on for them, instead of encouraging them to have a go at writing it themselves. Staff have introduced systems to record children's progress. These are sometimes used to plan activities for children's development, but this is inconsistent. There is no procedure to monitor the effectiveness of activities to ensure they are helping children to take the next step in their learning. Parents are given information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and their child's learning through the learning diary. There are currently no formal arrangements for sharing children's records with parents, however, they are reminded regularly that they may

see their child's records at any time. Resources have been made more easily accessible to the children, allowing them to make more choices in their play.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take action in order to meet the National Standards. In June 2007 concerns were raised regarding National Standard 1: Suitable Person, regarding there being no committee or registered person, National Standard 2: Organisation, that staff were not suitably qualified and staff ratios were not being met, National Standard 3: Care, Learning and Play, that children were not provided with stimulating activities and National Standard 7: Health, that nappy changing routines were not sufficient in supporting children's health. Ofsted carried out two unannounced visits in July 2007 and as a result the provider was set four actions. These were to; ensure that there are effective procedures in place for checking that staff are suitable to work with children and ensure that there is a suitable nominated person or committee in place (National Standard 1), ensure staff records and other documents are made available to the registered person and the regulator and ensure that Ofsted are informed of significant changes, including changes in the registered person (National Standard 14). A written response was received from the provider in September 2007 providing details of the action taken to address these issues. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain records 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 systems to record children's attendance, to ensure they include accurate times of arrival and departure
- ensure that hand washing routines minimise the risk of cross infection
- implement a system of staff appraisal to ensure the training needs of staff are identified and met

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):

- ensure that all children are effectively challenged through an increased range of interesting and stimulating activities
- introduce a system to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the curriculum to better support children's 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