

Greendown Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	507994
Inspection date	06 December 2007
Inspector	Rachel Edwards
Setting Address	Swindon Greendown School, Grange Park Way, Grange Park, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN5 6HN
Telephone number	01793 882234
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Registered person	The Trustees of Greendown 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Greendown Playgroup is situated in the grounds of Greendown Secondary School in Grange Park in West Swindon. It has been registered since 1996. The group have purchased their own mobile building and it is sited on the school field close to Lydiard Park. The building has two playrooms, a cloakroom, toilets and kitchen area. It has its own fully enclosed outdoor play area, which children use freely throughout the day.

The playgroup is registered to care for no more than 28 children from two to under five years at any one time. The playgroup is open every week day during term time from 09:15 until 14:30, with separate sessions in the morning and afternoon. Children may take a packed lunch and stay for the whole day. There are currently 55 children on roll, of whom 49 receive nursery education funding. The group supports children with additional needs.

There are 11 members of staff and seven of these have relevant child care qualifications. One member of staff is working towards an early years qualification. One of the team managers is a qualified teacher. The playgroup receives support from the early years advisory team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's good health is fully promoted whilst they are at playgroup. They are constantly reminded about the importance of personal hygiene and soon become highly proficient in managing this for themselves. They use the toilet and carefully wash their hands after. They find tissues when they need them and put them in the bin after use. They help to clean tables before eating and talk about getting rid of nasty germs. They jump up to wash an apple that's fallen on the floor and ask for a wet wipe to clean their face after lunch. They often talk about health issues, for example, whilst role playing doctors and hospitals or playing with the giant teeth and toothbrush. Staff help reduce the spread of infection by following highly effective policies and procedures, for example, by involving parents and children in maintaining a clean environment and explaining to parents why they cannot care for children who are unwell. Most staff have relevant first aid qualifications and so could deal appropriately with any accident.

Children enjoy and benefit from a really varied and interesting selection of healthy snacks, including foods from different cultures, each day. They are encouraged to try new tastes and to express their likes and dislikes, for example, a child says he does not like the yoghurt because of the pips. They help to prepare the food, learning to safely use knives to cut fruit or butter bread. Children's individual dietary needs are fully catered for. They sit together for meals, always with a member of staff, who gently encourages them to try new things. There is lots of lively chatter around the table and children are relaxed and interested in their food; it encourages them to eat very well. The playgroup also offers an optional lunch club when children bring packed lunches from home and parents are given guidance on including healthy options. Children are able to help themselves to drinks whenever they choose. They skilfully pour milk or water from jugs placed on a low table. They know that it is important to drink plenty, especially after running around or in hot weather.

Children benefit from being able to choose when to play outdoors. As a result they all go outside every day for fresh air and vigorous exercise, whatever the weather, confident they can come back into the warm whenever they want and then go out again. They are able to choose freely from a wide range of activities, many of which they initiate themselves, such as painting the fence. They pedal and scoot at speed and dig enthusiastically, filling and pouring cans to make big muddy puddles. The outside area is well supervised by staff who are on hand to stretch and challenge children so that they develop their physical skills well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children use bright, warm and welcoming premises. Staff have made the playrooms and entrance hall extremely welcoming and attractive to children and parents. There are informative notice boards and examples of children's art work beautifully displayed. There are many photographs of children enjoying activities, which they enjoy looking at and increases their sense of belonging. Children's independence is exceptionally well developed as the space and resources are so well organised to encourage them to manage their own personal care and to make independent choices about what to play with. Everything is made available to them, for example, tissues and painting aprons are easy to reach and the excellent range of high quality play materials are organised so that children know what is available and can safely reach them for themselves. They make full use of the indoor and outdoor areas to support children's learning in all areas.

Children play in safety, whilst at the same time, being allowed to take measured risks so they learn some sense of danger and how to keep themselves safe. Staff carry out thorough risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor areas every day. They plan very carefully for outings, ensuring there are sufficient adults to supervise at all times. Staff are deployed highly effectively, so that children can move safely around all areas. There are excellent procedures in place to keep children safe as they arrive and to ensure they only leave with the agreed adult. Children learn to safely use proper tools, such as hammers and nails, knives and scissors. They ride on wheeled toys, including for some, bikes without stabilisers enjoying the thrill and small sense of danger as they roll down the hill. They learn how to behave near the road, when they walk to the local park and interesting visitors, such as the police, help to reinforce their learning in meaningful ways.

Staff fully understand their responsibility to safeguard children's welfare; they have attended training and this is updated regularly. There are clear lines of responsibility in place and agreed procedures to follow in the event of any concern about a child's wellbeing.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are exceptionally confident, happy and settled. Whilst waiting for the doors to open, they chat about what they plan to do in playgroup that day, obviously eager to attend. Once in they quickly hang up coats and find their name to register themselves before soon becoming engrossed in an activity of their choosing. Often there are activities led by staff where children delight in learning new skills and are encouraged to develop their ideas and express themselves by the extremely skilful and knowledgeable staff. There is a very strong emphasis on child led play and with the excellent staff deployment and high quality interactions between staff and children as they play, it means that children are continually challenged in all areas of their development. Children move between the two playrooms and the outdoor area independently, they know that help is readily available if needed and this makes them confident to try new experiences.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage of their education. Staff meet regularly to plan a varied and interesting range of activities that cover the six required areas of learning very well. Staff have an in depth understanding of how children learn through play. They acknowledge that each child is different and learns in different ways and they take this into account as they plan, change and adapt activities so that everyone is included. For instance, staff will ensure that a child who loves to play outside, is still learning in all areas, perhaps exploring volume through filling cans or making meaningful marks in the sandpit.

Children receive high quality teaching both individually and in small groups, often with their key worker. They make outstanding progress in developing speaking and listening skills. Staff have attended training and have adopted the nationally approved Letters and Sounds approach to developing communication and early reading skills. Children thoroughly enjoy joining in with the different, small group listening activities which are presented in a multitude of exciting and meaningful ways. They understand that marks carry meaning, as they write cards and make very plausible attempts to write their names on pieces of art. They listen avidly to well read stories, asking questions and predicting what will happen next.

Children's mathematical development is particularly strong. Staff look for every opportunity to pose simple everyday problems that require children to use their developing understanding of numbers. For example, they puzzle out how to share three apples between six children and cheerfully announce that the teacher can have the extra bowl of crisps as they have one too many. They spontaneously use numbers and mathematical language in their play, counting and comparing, for example, working out how many more bits of rail track they need to make it the same length as another.

Children demonstrate wonderful creativity in their art work and in their imaginative play. Children love to play in the very well resourced home corner, where they try out new roles, for example, experiencing what it's like to move and talk like a robot or act out familiar scenarios, as they cook for their families or do the shopping. This often leads to highly co-operative play, agreeing roles and developing story lines together. Children have excellent opportunities to learn about the natural world and their local community. Whilst playing outside they find and watch bugs, notice ice and frost on the ground and play with things blowing in the wind. They often visit the nearby country park, where they can watch wildlife and observe the changing seasons. They are curious and confident to explore and experiment as they play.

Staff make very frequent and detailed observations of what children can do. They monitor children's progress and regularly discuss how to move children on to the next stage. This ensures that sessions are challenging, planning is very flexible and activities are led by children's needs and interests.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children and their families and carers are warmly welcomed into the group. Each child has a key member of staff who talks with parents and has the responsibility for working with a small number of children, giving them reassurance and monitoring their progress. This system is highly effective in ensuring that excellent trusting relationships are made with children and parents and ensuring that each child's individual needs are fully met. In this way children feel valued, happy and secure and they are confident to explore and try out new things. There are very effective arrangements for caring for children with additional needs and helping them to achieve as much as they can. Children learn very well that people differ in many ways and they learn to value this through relevant and enjoyable activities, such as parents talking to children about festivals they celebrate in their home. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff are wonderful role models to the children. They are warm, caring and attentive towards the children and other adults. Staff are always alert to children's behaviour and immediately spot any acts of unkindness or poor behaviour. They explain clearly to children, who respond extremely well. Children enjoy taking responsibility, they are eager to help tidy up or help others, for example, putting on coats and boots.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. It contributes significantly to children's progress and well-being. They are given clear and useful information about all aspects of the care and education that their children receive. Parents speak very highly of the pre-school and in particular of the personal care they feel each child receives. Parents and staff regularly exchange information about how their children are getting on. There are also planned occasions throughout the year when they look through children's records together. Staff regularly use photographs of children involved in activities to help parents better understand how their children learn

through play. Parents are encouraged to contribute towards children's learning in different ways, for example, by helping out at sessions or sharing special skills and knowledge, such as playing musical instruments.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The committee and playgroup managers work together extremely effectively to provide an outstanding level of care and education for all the children. There are effective procedures in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff, ensuring that all those involved in working with the children are suitable to do so. Enough staff are employed so that children receive high levels of individual attention. There is a strong commitment to staff training and most are qualified or on training programmes; the staff appraisal system is valued and identifies any additional training needs. All the required documentation is in place. A full range of thoughtfully written and effective policies are in place, which support the safe and efficient running of the playgroup. These are shared with parents and staff carefully follow agreed procedures. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. The two team managers and their deputies work very effectively, providing clear and inspirational leadership to the highly committed team of staff. They meet daily to discuss their practice and the children's progress and to plan for each child's future learning. Exceptional staff deployment ensures that children are well supported wherever they choose to play, inside or outdoors. There is a strong ethos of reviewing and continually seeking to improve practice, in this way the playgroup have been successful in identifying their areas of strength and those they wish to further develop. They welcome support from outside professionals and act on advice to further improve their already highly effective practice.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection three recommendations were made to improve the quality of care and education, all of these have been fully addressed. Children are now able to help themselves to fresh drinking water whenever they need to and this is beneficial to their good health. The indoor and outdoor environment has been reorganised to allow children to be highly independent in selecting and using activities and materials to initiate their own play. They are able to choose from a very wide range of craft and construction materials, which they use to design and create individual pieces of work. Parents have regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress with their key member of staff. They are encouraged to share what they know about their children, so that an accurate picture of children's achievements is built up.

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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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