

Orange Tree Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	118555
Inspection date	03 October 2007
Inspector	Marilyn Peacock

Setting Address	Pettits Lane, Romford, Essex, RM1 4EH
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Registered person	Pamela White
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Sessional care
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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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Orange Tree Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1995. It operates from a classroom within Marshalls Park School, which is situated in a residential area of Romford, close to public transport.

There are currently 57 children on roll. This includes 22 children that receive funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during school term time only. Opening hours are from 09:15 to 11:45, and from 12:15 to 14:45.

There are eight staff working with children in total, six of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. The playgroup receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a clean environment where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene. Staff always accompany children to the toilets as they are a short walk away from the pre school room. Therefore they are readily available to monitor children's hand washing practices and explain the importance of good hygiene practices.

Children stay healthy because practitioners implement effective health and hygiene practices, when changing nappies and preparing tables for snacks, using anti bacterial spray to ensure the environment is sterile and the risk of infection is minimised. Children's health is maintained because practitioners have a good knowledge of their individual health and dietary requirements and obtain relevant information about their medical history. Effective procedures are in place to deal with accidents and the administration of medication and records are accurate and well maintained ensuring all information is shared with parents. However, accident records are not maintained in a confidential manner, parents can read previous entries, consequently, children's privacy is compromised.

Fresh drinking water is readily available from the water dispenser in the corner of the play room. Children are beginning to understand that they can help themselves to water when they are thirsty. Children take it in turns to hand out fruit at snack time which is a sociable time when children sit together and chat about their day. However, children have to queue too wash their hands and wait while staff cut up the fruit and pour their drinks. Therefore, children become restless and need to be reminded of their table manners.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The pre school environment is warm and welcoming. All areas used by the children are clean and tidy ensuring that children have room to move and can play safely. Children use a wide range of good quality toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. Activities are set up before children arrive and children are encouraged to ask for different resources during the session.

Staff organise the play space effectively, allowing children space to move around safely, freely and independently. Good routines and gentle reminders help children learn about safety within the setting. Staff give clear explanations about staying safe, for example, not running in the room because the floor is still wet. Effective systems are in place to ensure children's safety at the beginning and end of sessions. The entrance is monitored and effective procedures are in place to ensure children are collected by people who are known to practitioners, which helps to ensure that children are kept safe. Children are learning to keep themselves safe through discussions and activities with the staff, such as visits from the fire brigade and the road safety song. Emergency evacuation procedures are practised regularly. Therefore, children are familiar with the procedures and follow the simple instructions readily, helping to keep them safe in an emergency.

Children's welfare is further safeguarded by the staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection matters. The person responsible for child protection knows the procedures to follow

should they have a concern about a child, and the necessary documentation is in place to support their practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school, most children arrive happy and eager to participate. They are making good progress. Close and caring relationships with staff increase the children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Children are also beginning to form good relationships with each other. Communication skills with children are well supported through good adult to child interactions.

All staff are aware of Birth to three matters programme but are not using it to inform their planning. Consequently the next steps for children under three are not clearly identified in their records. The staffs sound knowledge of child development ensures they are making suitable progress. Activities and play opportunities are purposeful and developmentally appropriate, resulting in children being motivated and interested.

Many children are new to the setting and clear settling in procedures are in place for children, this includes gaining information from parents about their child's routines and care. Consequently, staff are sensitive to and meet children's individual needs well.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. Staff understand how children learn through play based activities. They provide a well organised child centred environment. Observations of children's learning are used to inform their records of assessment and enable staff to clearly identify their next steps for learning. Planning systems are in place and reflect the six areas of learning. Detailed reports are produced for parents every six months clearly showing children's progress and identifying children's next steps. However, daily activity plans do not identify possible learning opportunities from activities. Therefore, not all staff are aware of possible learning for children which attend on that day.

At present all children attending are under four years and many are new to the setting. Consequently, staff are concentrating on helping children settle into the pre school environment. They are concentrating on helping children separated from their parent and creating an environment where children are beginning to feel secure. Staff are sensitive to children's needs and are on hand to support their choices. Children are encouraged to bring in items from home to share with the other children. Staff use these items to encourage children's communication skills and to introduce new vocabulary. Children are starting to share their experiences with key staff. They respond well to simple instructions and are starting to listen attentively to stories at story time. Children select and share books in small groups, using the pictures as clues to the story line and starting to turn the pages appropriately. Children practise emergent writing in a variety of situations, for example, in the pre school shop.

Children use the shops tills to take the money for the goods and they pull plastic debit cards through the card reader. Music and rhymes are used well to introduce children to different sounds and pitch. Number songs and nursery rhymes help children develop understanding of simple addition and subtraction. Children explore a variety of materials including sand, water and clay. They use tools and resources to develop co-ordination skills. Children enthusiastically

empty and fill containers and are starting to recognise which is the biggest container and which takes the most water.

Children are beginning to investigate information communication technology; they use computers with the help of children on work experience. They engage in long conversations using mobile phones to talk to mummy and tell her how their day is going. Children discover the wider world around them, exploring other cultures through discussions and activities. They take pre school toys on holiday with them and send postcards back to the preschool which they then use to plot their trip on the map of the world. Children join in simple songs and rhymes, matching movements to music. Children move freely around the classroom, joining in activities which interest them. Children respond well to staff and are willing to try new activities without fear of failure.

Children show keen interest in music and excitedly participate in games where they recognise the instrument a member of staff is playing out of sight of them. Children are starting to demonstrate construction skills, building with boxes and paper tubes. There are many opportunities for children to develop hand eye coordination using sponges and stencils. However, most art and craft activities are pre selected by staff with a clear end product in mind. Consequently, children have few opportunities to develop their natural curiosity by exploring media, texture and colour. Children have few chances to develop their own ideas and express their interest using their senses.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are highly valued in the setting and effective systems are in place to support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Practitioners liaise extremely closely with parents and other professionals to ensure children are fully included in all aspects of the group and their individual needs met. Staff readily adapt activities to ensure children are fully integrated into pre school life. Most staff are trained to use Makaton signs and can use an Epi pen in an emergency. Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported as staff are familiar with words the children use at home. Staff treat children with respect and use lots of praise and encouragement to promote their self-esteem. Children enjoy respectful relationships with adults and each other. They are gaining a better understanding of the wider world through topic work and looking at different festivals.

Children are very well behaved. They are developing caring relationships with the staff and are beginning to understand the needs of other children as they learn to share toys. Children respond positively to the staff's constant praise and encouragement. Consequently, children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Staff use good explanations to help children learn right from wrong. They manage children's behaviour through age/stage appropriate techniques, such as distraction and simple explanations.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Effective, flexible induction and settling in procedures enables parents to share information about their child and to feel at ease in the group. Parents are well informed about the pre-school in a variety of ways, including information in the parent handbook, details displayed on the notice board and regular newsletters. There is a happy buzz as staff and parents share information on their child's care and learning at the start and end of the session. Most of the necessary consents and permissions are in place and reviewed regularly. The exception is the complaints procedure which breaches regulations as it is not in line with changes in legislation implemented in October 2005. There is no complaints

log in place and contact details of the regulator are out of date which could compromise children's safety. However, children's safety is not compromised as the preschool staff have developed trusting relationships with parents and there has not been any complaints made to the setting since the last inspection.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents speak highly of the staff and the setting. They receive good information, in the form of newsletters about the setting so they know about topics and special events and are encouraged to share their talents and skills with the group. Information on the curriculum is displayed and staff are currently working on developing the information given to parents about how the Foundation Stage curriculum is used to help children learn.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The long established team work well together. They share information through regular team meetings and informal chats at the start of each day. There is a good balance between adult-led and child initiated activities each session and children have regular opportunities for outdoor play. Staff deploy themselves effectively to provide good levels of support to the children. Overall, the setting meets the needs of all the children who attend.

Children are cared for by staff that have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. The majority of the staff team hold relevant childcare qualifications and attention to ongoing professional development ensures their practice continues to remain current and meets the needs of all the children. All policies and procedures apart from the complaints procedure follow current legislation. They are shared with parents who provide all the necessary information to ensure children's health and well being.

Leadership and management are good. All practitioners have a secure knowledge of how to successfully promote children's learning. Clear systems are in place to plan and evaluate the educational programme, and how this is delivered.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection of the funded nursery education provision the setting was recommended to increase children's awareness of the different purposes of reading and writing; this has now been completed, children use writing and reading in a variety of ways each day to support other activities. For example, making shopping lists and looking at reference books in the computer corner. Children now have more opportunities to learn about and use information and communication technology when they act out using mobile telephones and swipe play credit cards through the play tills. There are still weaknesses in the programme for children's creative development, most activities involve pre cut objects or stencils which limits opportunities for children to express their own ideas and feelings.

Following the last care inspection the setting was required to ensure that children are offered activities that are creative and child centred. Activities are still very adult led with an adult outcome expected. This remains an issue and another recommendation has been raised following this inspection. The setting where also asked to ensure that children are given the opportunity to further develop their personal independence and choice. Children are now given adequate choice of activities and resources are readily available encouraging children's independence. However, snack time is very adult lead with few opportunities for children to develop their

independence skills as staff pour their drinks and cut fruit in readiness for them to eat. This remains a recommendation following this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

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):

- make sure that the complaints procedure complies with current legislation.
- review snack time to ensure children are suitably occupied and are able to become increasingly independent.
- make sure all entries in the accident book remain confidential at all times.
- make use of the Birth to three framework to inform planning and record keeping for children under three.

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 planning to include information on how the activities contribute to children's learning and development.
- develop the staffs understanding of children's creative learning to enable them to provide more opportunities for children to express their creativity and develop their own ideas.

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