

Little Fishes Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254465
Inspection date	10 October 2007
Inspector	Karen Cooper
Setting Address	St Mary's Parish Church, The Green, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 8NH
Telephone number	01922 455229
E-mail	
Registered person	Little Fishes Playgroup
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Fishes Playgroup opened in 1996. It operates from two large rooms within St Mary's Parish Church premises close to the centre of Aldridge, Walsall. The playgroup serves the local area.

Currently, there are 30 children aged two to three years on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup opens Monday, Tuesday and Friday mornings during school term-times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00.

There are six staff employed to work with the children. The majority of staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 3 and the manager is a qualified Special Needs Teacher. The playgroup receives support from a development worker from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff are active in promoting good health and hygiene practice. Children know when to wash their hands, such as after going to the toilet and before eating and do so independently. Children are cared for appropriately if they have an accident or become ill. Staff are trained in administering first aid and all medication and accidents are appropriately recorded. Consent to administer medication and to seek emergency treatment is obtained at registration. However, there is no written policy in place with regard to the administering of medication to ensure the children's health is protected.

Children's health and dietary needs are well met through a range of nutritious and healthy snacks including fruit, vegetables sticks and toast. Children learn about healthy eating, through topics, displays and daily discussions. They talk about foods 'that are good for them'. During role play children play with real fruit and vegetables to help them understand about healthy foods. Snack times are treated as a social occasion when children and staff sit around the table to enjoy their food and each other's company. Drinks are offered at set times during the day. However, children do not have independent access to fresh drinking to ensure that they remain hydrated.

Resources and space are used well to support children's play. Children enjoy a good range of activities using indoor and outdoor equipment. They play with a good selection of toys and resources that conform to safety standards. They develop their physical skills and enjoy the fresh air through regular use of the outside area. They have use of two rooms within the church premises, the pink room is mainly used to participate in large group games such as music and movement. They competently use the climbing frame, push-alongs and eagerly join in familiar action rhymes such as 'The wheels on the bus'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children can move safely around the setting because staff are deployed effectively and are vigilant about their safety, indoors and outside. Staff undertake daily safety checks and carry out a risk assessment of the premises which is updated to include new equipment. Access to the setting is monitored and visitors are requested to sign in and out of the premises. Attendance records are accurate because children's times of arrival and departure are clearly recorded. This helps ensure children's safety in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe as they take part in regular fire drills and evacuation procedures. They enjoy detailed discussions with staff about keeping safe and visitors such as the fire department and police encourage children to begin to take responsibility for themselves and others.

Children are further safeguarded because staff are aware of their child protection responsibilities. All staff have undertaken child protection training and are confident that they would be able to recognise any signs or symptoms of abuse. They know the correct action to take to protect a child if they have concerns and are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff. The written child protection policy is shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and enjoy their time at the setting. This enables them to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They take part in a good range of activities which staff plan and prepare to encourage them to develop skills and have fun. For example, children enjoy using their imaginations in role play taking on familiar roles of people in the community and their families, such as a green grocer, mother and father. They acquire new knowledge and skills as staff positively interact with them to encourage their interest, involvement and learning such as other vegetables including squash and Munchkin pumpkins.

Children have developed positive relationships with staff and each other. They are valued and staff help them feel good about themselves by frequently providing positive support, praise and encouragement; while managing behaviour very well; this helps build children's self-esteem.

Staff use the framework 'Birth to three matters' to involve children and further their development. Children's work is attractively displayed within this welcoming environment. This helps children to feel a sense of belonging.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the playgroup because staff value and respect their individuality. Children's confidence and self-esteem is well fostered. Children are actively learning about themselves, each other and the world they live in through planned and spontaneous activities, toys and resources such as dressing-up clothes, puzzles, books and figures. They take part in celebrations of different festivals from around the world, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year and have tasted food from other cultures.

Staff with responsibility for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have developed very good relationships with parents and other professionals, so that all children are included in all aspects of playgroup life and make progress in their development. Staff involve parents in the development of individual education plans and liaise with outside agencies, where necessary, to learn the best strategies to help a child make progress in their development.

Children are listened to and staff value what they say, which helps them to feel good about themselves. They are learning to play well together and are encouraged to share, take turns and consider the feelings of others. Staff are caring, calm, patient and provide good role models for children. Praise is given freely to children, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and an understating of what is right and wrong. Music is used effectively to promote good behaviour, for example, children know that the sound of the tambourine indicates tidy-up time.

Staff work in close partnership with parents and as a result the excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being. Parents' views about their child's needs are actively sought before they start at the group. This ensures that children receive continuity of care with home. Staff keep parents informed daily and encourage them to spend time in the setting to offer their talents and skills. They promote parental participation on a rota system providing parents with meaningful tasks to undertake. Parents are provided with clear information about the service offered through, for example, a prospectus, regular

newsletters, daily discussion, policies and procedures. All parents are made aware of their child's key worker. They are regularly asked for feedback about the care and service offered, any suggestions are noted and acted on if necessary.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. There is a clear sense of purpose and direction within this setting and staffing levels are very good which ensures good levels of support are offered to children. Children are grouped with key workers in small groups. This promotes consistency which helps the children to feel secure and confident with their carers.

Staff are qualified, experienced and committed to continuous improvement and development, which has a positive impact on children's overall learning and development. They use their knowledge well to plan and provide exciting opportunities for children. They work well as a team to meet the individual needs of children and ensure children access a wide variety of activities to encourage them to make progress in their development. Staff meetings ensure they have a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities.

Staff have developed a wide range of effective procedures which enable staff, volunteers and parents to know how the group operates on a day-to-day basis. They use the documentation well to support the care of the children and comply with regulations. Children's records are clear, up-to-date, easily accessible and stored securely. There is a comprehensive range of policies and procedures. These are regularly reviewed, updated, and shared with parents.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was requested to ensure children's accident records are maintained confidentially; ensure there is clear written procedure for staff to follow in the event of allegations of abuse and ensure times of arrival and departure of children are recorded in the attendance register.

All accidents are appropriately recorded and staff use the documentation well to support the care of the children and comply with regulations. Children's records are clear, up-to-date, easily accessible and stored securely to ensure confidentiality is maintained. Staff have attended child protection training and are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff. Children's attendance is accurately recorded stating exact times of arrival and departure. This ensures children are cared for safely.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

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 fresh drinking water is made available to children at all times
- devise a policy for the administration of medication and share this with parents.

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