

Foulds Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	147535
Inspection date	01 November 2007
Inspector	Carolyn Mary Hasler
Setting Address	Foulds School, Byng Road, Barnet, Herts, EN5 4NR
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Registered person	Denise Patrick
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 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?

Foulds Pre School Playgroup is a privately run provision. It opened in 1985. It operates from a self contained building located within the grounds of Foulds infant and primary school in Barnet. The local area is predominantly residential. A maximum of 28 children attend at any one time. The group is open each week day during term time only. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00. Afternoon sessions operate Monday and Wednesday from 12:45 until 15:15.

There are currently 38 children aged two to five years on roll, of these 25 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and wider catchment areas. The setting currently supports children with English as an additional language.

There are four staff, including the manager who work with the children, two of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting also supports students.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning how to live healthy lifestyles. Older children are using the toilets independently, these are well stocked and easily accessible, they are reminded to wash their hands through clear signage above the sinks. During group activities they learn about the spread of germs and why it is important to wash their hands. However, not enough emphasis has been given to ensure that children wash their hands before touching or consuming food which compromises children's health. When children become sick or injured, immediate first aid is on hand and appropriate measures are taken to ensure their comfort, inform parents and where necessary take emergency action. The setting ensures that appropriate systems are in place to ensure the premises and equipment are cleaned. This means that children have a clean environment to play in.

Children are learning about healthy eating, through project work, group discussion and consistently offering children nutritious and healthy snacks. They are independent in accessing both snacks and drinks throughout the sessions ensuring that children do not become dehydrated or hungry. Snacks consist of a variety of fresh fruits for children to taste. Through consultation with parents, the setting ensures that they are informed of all children's dietary needs and preferences.

Children are able to access fresh air and exercise each day accessing a variety of outside play equipment which help children build awareness of their bodies, stretching and building skills in large and fine muscle co-ordination. Opportunities are offered to balance both through climbing, the use of balancing beams and stilts. Children are learning to control and direct trikes and cars and the more able are using peddles confidently. Staff engage children in activities such as playing with bats and balls, where they are using upper muscular skills. Tools such as scissors, paint brushes, pencils and pens help them build hand eye co ordination and help children build mark making skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents are welcomed upon arrival by warm and friendly staff who know them well, they settle quickly because staff engage those who are less confident. Children are familiar with their environment which is conducive to play and quickly become involved. Walls are covered in children's posters and directed art work and the environment is busy with lots to see and engage in. They have access to natural light through the many picture windows around the hall which can be opened to allow fresh air ensuring that the premises are always well ventilated. The premises are at a comfortable temperature, radiators can be regulated to ensure that children are learning and playing in comfort. The hall is divided into different areas of play and this allows children to learn where they can find different activities. The setting has access to a kitchen and toilets which are set off the play area. Children make good use of the playground which is also easily accessible from the hall. Low level storage of play equipment and varied play opportunities which are set out for children, allows them easy access and encourages their confidence which helps them act independently when self selecting. Toys and play equipment are well organised, in good repair and are of good quality. Furniture is suitable for its purpose and is child size allowing comfort for children while they play and learn.

Children are learning about how to keep safe, clear and consistent boundaries and reminders from staff, help them understand the perimeters of their behaviour. They are learning how to evacuate the premises safely in the event of an emergency and basic road skills when on outings. The setting conducts regular risk assessments both inside and on the outside play area, risk assessments for outings are informal and do not sufficiently inform to ensure the safety and welfare of children when out. Additionally the fire log book does not inform the reader in detail how quickly children are evacuated and if there were any difficulties. Consequently the efficiency of evacuating children is not measured. The setting ensures the premises are secure, parents and visitors ring a bell by the gate which allows entry. Clear and well understood policies on the collection of children ensure that they do not go home with persons unknown to the nursery. Although the visitors log book is inconsistently used, children are supervised appropriately. The deployment of staff was balanced and ensured that children could be seen at all times.

Clear policies and procedures help staff work towards ensuring that vulnerable children are safeguarded from abuse. However, not all staff have had training in this area and knowledge and understanding of child protection issues is inconsistent. This compromises children's welfare and safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are building positive relationships with the staff because they are warm and friendly and this helps them build friendships with their play mates, building confidence and self esteem. They are learning to make choices in their play as play is free-flow and allows children time to focus or change direction. They are offered opportunities to play on their own, as part of small groups or within large group activities, helping them understand how to conform to a group and building social skills. All children are offered a wide and varied choice of play experiences which they enjoy and which helps them to achieve and make progress. All achievements are acknowledge and celebrated and this helps children feel special.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning for children who receive Nursery Education is satisfactory. Staff are flexible in their approach and show volumes of enthusiasm. They engage children well and keep their interests because they listen to the children and encourage children to discuss, explore and investigate for themselves. Staff model how to use equipment, ensure that children have adequate and appropriate equipment and enable children to make progress. However, their knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum is inconsistent and they lack evidence on how they monitor and evaluate children's progress. Planning does not take account of how they extend or adapt activities to ensure that all children are making progress.

Children show good levels of self confidence and self esteem because they feel valued and listened too and are able to self select from the activities available. They have good levels of concentration and are interested and involved in their play. Children are building trusting relationships with staff and this helps them play and learn independently, in small groups and in large group activities. They are building confidence in listening and speaking skills, engaging in large group activities such as story time, their attention caught as they listen and interact with the staff member, comparing and relating their own lives to the story. They are enjoying books on their own, turning the pages from right to left and enjoying the close contact of listening to a story read to them on a one to one level. They are all enjoying song and rhyme time and some children are confident to stand up on their own and sing their favourite songs

for the group. Children are chatty and use language in all situations particularly while playing in the home corner, open ended questions help children talk about their interests, families and experiences. Written word has been displayed all around their environment in the form of posters and labels.

Children are counting as a group and individually to 10 and beyond, they associate number to object and are beginning to understand concepts such as one more and one less and recognise numbers in written form. Children are discriminating between large and small objects and can place these in sequence of size. They have opportunities to problem solve with puzzles, construction and small world situations. Children are exploring and investigating different materials and how they react when mixed together, such as sand when mixed with water and cooking ingredients when mixed together. Other pliable materials are available and offer children opportunities to create models. They have been learning about the changes of the seasons and days of the week, recently children enjoyed an autumn walk where they collected leaves which decorate the tree house home corner. They have opportunities to learn about life cycles through growing seedlings; and are encouraged to take care and respect the animals that live in their garden, for example snails. Children are finding out about information and communication technology, they have access to computers and are building confidence in mouse skills, moving the mouse around the screen to choose and identify, in addition children are accessing equipment such as calculators and toy phones, building an understanding of how equipment works.

Children have opportunities to be creative, the walls of the play room are covered in children's work, most of which is directed art work for projects. They also have opportunities to explore and investigate colour for themselves enjoying free access to paints, pencils and crayons, glue and scissors. They are offered different and interesting materials to cut and stick with incorporating recycled boxes and tubs for making three dimensional models. Although children sing each day and have a variety of music playing in the background, their opportunities to experience rhythm and sound through the use of musical instruments is limited.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They have access to both the indoor and outdoor environment, where they are learning how to take care of plants, observe snails and other mini beasts that enter the playground and staff spend time explaining to children how some animals hibernate in the winter. This helps them to build a spiritual awareness of all things around them and in particular nature, the changing seasons and weather and a sense of moral responsibility to their environment and towards others. They are learning about their own and others' cultures, religions and lifestyles. The setting caters for children from the diverse local community and their natural curiosity and ability to make friends which are sometimes extended to outside the setting helps children build a greater understanding of how other people live their lives. The nurturing environment of the setting, which is well resourced with play equipment, posters and books, helps to promote positive images of others who are different to themselves but also images of people who have lots of similarities. This helps children to explore and investigate their thoughts and feelings. Children have been learning about festivals both religious and cultural and how people celebrate them; through project work. They have been learning recently about festivals which fall in the Autumn months, for example Halloween and firework night. In addition they have also been learning about the Jewish faith and how people celebrate Hanukkah and other religious festivals such as Diwali. This helps them build a greater understanding of their community and the wider world.

Although the setting does not currently care for any children with special needs or learning difficulties, a Special Needs Coordinator has been appointed and supports staff in their assessment, and subsequent work with children. The staff work closely with both parents and other professional bodies providing children with action plans which helps them progress along the stepping stones. The setting has policies and procedures in place to support the needs of children with learning disabilities and which recognises the responsibility to meet the needs of all children making all reasonable adjustments to care arrangements in order to help them meet their full potential.

Children are learning about how to manage their own behaviour, they are learning important social skills such as how to conform to group situations, sharing and taking turns with popular pieces of equipment. Trusting relationships with staff who offer children positive role models on how to behave and skills in keeping children interested and engaged ensures children's cooperation and responsive attitudes. Children are learning to be kind to one another and to respond to each other with politeness. They receive positive messages of encouragement and this helps them feel valued and important, strategies for supporting challenging behaviour are age appropriate and take account of children's ability to understand and achieve. As a result children are very well behaved.

Children benefit from secure relationships between the setting and their parents and carers. Both parents and staff work together to support children's first days. They ensure that children establish trusting relationships with key workers in order for children to separate successfully and feel secure. On initial contact parents receive an information pack which contains information about the setting, it helps parents to prepare children for nursery life and establishes a greater understanding of how the setting works. A database of children's individual needs and emergency details is obtained to ensure that the setting has appropriate and detailed information on each child. Parents and staff share information frequently through the use of home/nursery diaries. This helps the nursery have a greater understanding of the children they are working with and also helps parents to understand how well children are doing. The setting has a complaints procedure which is in line with changes in regulation since October 2005.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive Nursery Education is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the six areas of learning on initial contact with the setting. Regular news letters inform parents of activities and projects that are current or in the near future. They are encouraged and some take up opportunities to become involved in their children's learning, through story telling, ideas and suggestions for learning about other cultures and religions, supporting outings and trips and generally by supporting children in bringing in objects from home to support project work. Parents are invited in termly for coffee mornings and other events. Throughout the year parents and staff share a diary, which contain observations staff make on children's progress and at the end of the school year children receive a written report which covers how children are progressing across the six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel secure because they are cared for by staff who are kind and caring, the team holds the appropriate level of childcare qualifications and have all undergone a robust recruitment procedure. The staff team are established and work well together, their duties well defined. The setting organises space and resources to meet children's needs appropriately, they generally encourage children to be healthy because they organise routines which help children understand

and practise personal hygiene, eat well and exercise. Children are generally kept safe and are learning about how to keep safe. They do this because staff deployment and appropriate supervision is in place and children receive sufficient reminders. Generally record keeping is in place. Children enjoy their time at the setting, they are motivated and challenged, achievements are acknowledged and celebrated. They are contributing to their own community and learning about the wider world.

Children's care is underpinned by clear documentation. The setting ensures that all records are stored securely and practitioners understand issues of privacy and confidentiality. They ensure that children's records are maintained once children have left care arrangements.

Leadership and Management of the setting is satisfactory. Children benefit when staff and their managers have time to plan and share information appropriate to individual children's learning programmes. The setting sets time aside each week to meet and share ideas, look at training needs and plan activities for children. Although the managers have worked towards improving planning, it does not currently adapt or extend children sufficiently and staff knowledge and understanding of planning is sometimes inconsistent.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered provider agreed an action, to develop knowledge and understanding of responsibilities for notifying Ofsted of any changes which are significant and ensure that the registration certificate reflects those changes when necessary. The registered person understands her role and her intention is to ensure that Ofsted is notified of all significant changes within the allotted time span, applying for variations where necessary. This ensures the welfare and wellbeing of children through legislation.

In addition the registered person also agreed several recommendations. To maintain accurate registers of attendance that record both staff and children's arrival and departure times. This has fully been met and ensures that children are safeguarded because staff know who is on the premises in the event of an emergency.

They also agreed to obtain written parental permission for any outings. This has been fully met, ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of children through legislation and working appropriately with parents and carers.

Lastly the registered person agreed to ensure that at least one member of the staff holds a current first aid qualification. This has been fully met. All members of staff hold first aid certificates, ensuring that children's health and wellbeing is appropriately protected.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 1: Suitable Person. The provider confirmed that the setting was operating in breach of the conditions of registration. Two actions were set. The provider responded to the actions and Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards and remains qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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):

- develop hygiene routines to ensure that children are encouraged to wash hands before handling food
- devise and implement a detailed risk assessment for outings which informs planning and ensures children's safety and well-being while out. Make sure records to ensure children's safety are completed appropriately and consistently (fire log book, visitors book)

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 identify clear learning intentions, ensuring that activities can be adapted and extended for individuals or groups of children. (also applies to care)

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