

Daisy Chain Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119471
Inspection date	30 October 2007
Inspector	Jackie Cousins
Setting Address	600 Southchurch Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 2PT
Telephone number	01702 461616
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Registered person	The Trustees of Southend Christian Fellowship
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 good. 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?

Daisy Chain Pre-school is run by the Southend Christian Fellowship. It opened in 1991 and operates from two rooms within the Plaza Centre in Southend-on-Sea. A maximum of 25 children may attend the setting at any one time. The group opens four days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00 Monday to Thursday, and a lunch club is open from 12:00 until 12:15 on Monday and Tuesdays.

There are currently 17 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, six children receive funding for early education. The setting currently does not have any children with learning difficulties but the manager has been trained to support children with a variety of needs. A very small number of children are learning to speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs five staff. Three members of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Another member of staff is about to start working towards a Level 2 qualification in January next year. Two members of staff with at least a Level 2 qualification are always on duty.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children adopt healthy lifestyles well because staff are successful in their efforts to convince children to lead lives where they keep themselves fit. Children learn effectively about the benefits of physical education because they regularly work and play in the outside learning area. A recent topic successfully involved children in hygienic food preparation activities including the making of bread. The children learnt about the health benefits of eating pasta salads with vegetables because of good levels of understanding of the staff. Dietary needs of children are met well. Children are offered a good variety of healthy snacks including apples, bananas, crackers and cheese. Children carefully select a drink of water or milk from a tray at snack time. Drinks of water are available from the tap throughout the session if children ask for one but it is not easily accessible to them and they can not help themselves to water. This means that children may not always be fully hydrated.

Children's welfare are promoted well by all staff. This is partly because a policy on how to handle child sickness is successfully implemented. Children wash their hands thoroughly and wipe their noses effectively to keep the spread of illnesses to a minimum due to good staff encourage and guidance. Furthermore, the spread of infectious illness and health problems are reduced well due to the use of posters about current issues which are prominently displayed in the entrance area for parents to see. Written records of all medicines administered are kept effectively. Staff inform parents in detail about any medication given. Children are cared for well if they hurt themselves because staff are well trained to handle minor accidents and illnesses. First aid qualifications of staff are displayed clearly for all parents to see. An accident record is kept effectively by staff and it is signed by the parent when they are told about an incident which involved their child.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children keep themselves safe successfully because staff use leaflets about safety and have discussions with them. This ensures that children are suitably aware of everyday hazards. Children know what to do in the event of a fire because safety measures are good and include regular evacuation drills. Trips out with children are well planned due to the completion of risk assessments. Children are provided with snacks and drinks that are prepared in a clean and hygienic kitchen area. Children's welfare is safeguarded as the setting has very clear child protection procedures that are laid out well in the policy. Staff know what they would do if they had any concerns about a child. A suitable policy is implemented and staff are aware of what to do in the event of a child being uncollected or lost.

Children are cared for in two well managed rooms. There are attractive displays which motivate children to take a pride in their achievements. Resources stimulate children effectively because there are many interactive activities for them to undertake independently. Children can easily get involved in safe activities because the learning areas are well organised. During the inspection children concentrated well on the gluing and sticking of various materials together; for example, they made beautiful leaf collages using fabric. Equipment inside is in a good condition. Occasionally, the books used with groups of children are rather small. Indoor climbing equipment is used effectively to develop children's upper body strength. The playgroup has a safe fenced outside learning area and doors to the playgroup are secure. The use of the outside area is

planned satisfactorily with a generally effective range of equipment but resources to create circuits for small cars and bikes are slightly limiting and do not always help to develop children's motor skills well.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Younger and older children enjoy coming to the playgroup because they are welcomed by staff and their personal development is supported well. Children from all backgrounds and abilities are involved effectively in playgroup life. The children separate from their parents easily. Their confidence is developed considerably as a result of the staff's use of praise. Children enjoy creating shapes out of mouldable material because a wide variety of cutting tools are provided. The children make connections in their learning because staff plan activities which link activities well. The children are really proud of their pictures which they have created using glue and various materials. They are suitably keen to take their work home and show their parents what they have been doing.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. Therefore teaching is effective and so children make good progress in all areas of learning. This means that children are prepared successfully for the next stage of education. Staff manage children successfully and so they behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Independence in children is promoted well because, for example, they choose which fruit they will have for their mid-morning snack from a wide variety of savoury items on offer through the term. Children experience all aspects of learning productively throughout the school term because of well written planning. The planning is specific and effectively uses the early learning goals and developmental guidance. Use of time is good and this means that the morning is methodically planned so that children have access to both organised activities and free play. As a result, children have high quality opportunities to initiate their own play and learning. The children are eager to join in tasks because staff are enthusiastic about the learning activities. Children learn to listen attentively because staff place a high degree of importance on this area of understanding. For instance, children listened and counted backwards accurately from five to zero through the good use of firework rhymes. Staff have an effective knowledge of how this age group learn best and so practical activities are utilized to good effect. Children are successfully challenged because staff have high expectations of them. For example, children learn to compare numbers methodically. Questions such as, 'How many more purple cogs are there than blue?' challenge children effectively. Rhyme and song are used well for many areas of learning. Children develop their understanding of rhythm successfully, for instance, they learn to say 'Five Little Leaves' while they make actions which match with the words.

Children's knowledge of numbers and mathematics are developed successfully through practical activities and songs. Children learn to write and draw well because there are a good range of resources and they are used well. They are encouraged to learn to read as a result of the effective use of books and stories. Children's understanding of the sounds that certain letters make is well developed because good teaching methods are used. Effectively planned topics on well known stories have developed children's understanding of traditional tales such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. In connection with this project children learnt to use their senses well when they tasted porridge. Children show considerable curiosity and understanding of the world. For example, they learn successfully about the changes in nature during the season of

autumn because a display table is used effectively and is covered in leaves which children can look at and handle. Children enjoy studying a Christian story in detail from the Bible each week because a considerable amount of thought has been put into planning this area of learning. Areas for creative development are used soundly and children can expand their imagination by dressing up as different characters. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to promote learning. For example, children have developed their drawing skills by creating patterns on the computer screen through using the computer mouse.

Assessment activities are used effectively. Assessment records are carefully completed. Regular observations and assessments of children are recorded accurately in each area of learning. The records show most children are working at national expectations for their age group. Children's progress is not always tracked thoroughly and so staff do not consistently have a detailed knowledge of what they need to do to further extend children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children make a positive contribution to the community. They are encouraged effectively to feel that they are an important part of the playgroup. This is partly because activities are set up as they arrive which get them involved in working alongside and with others in stimulating challenges. The children also learn to work well as a team. For example, they learn that sharing is important when they read about the story of the 'Little Red Hen.' The children raise money caringly for charities three times a year.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's self-esteem is promoted through positive comments from staff. Their emotional development is promoted well. This is because staff openly discuss different ways of handling situations with children so that they understand how their actions affect the feelings of others. The establishment of key workers who are responsible for a group of five or six children allows them to form strong relationships with one adult. Children's social development is promoted well as a result of effective guidance from staff. When children behave maturely they are rewarded with positive comments from staff. Children's behaviour is satisfactory. Occasionally, one or two children can handle equipment a little bit roughly. Playgroup rules are understood by children well. Children demonstrate a clear understanding of right from wrong. The children are satisfactorily aware of our multicultural society. The children work thoughtfully with musical instruments, books and puzzles from other countries which allow them to explore similarities and differences between cultures. Children's additional needs are met well. A very small number of children are learning to speak English as an additional language and they are supported successfully.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are welcomed into the rooms at the start of the session to discuss their child's progress and any concerns they have about their well-being. Parents are satisfactorily encouraged to share what they know about their children and so staff use this information and their own initial evaluations of the starting points of children to plan activities. Good record sheets are available for parents to read whenever they wish to see them. Parents spoken to during the inspection said they received detailed levels of oral information about their child's progress. Parents' meetings are held usually at least twice a year, when children's records of achievement are discussed effectively. The formal meetings and opportunities to talk to staff every day are greatly appreciated by parents. However, personal targets which children are working towards are not always recorded effectively or given to parents in a way that will assist them to regularly support their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The playgroup is well organised and the required documentation is in place.

Registers clearly record both children's arrival and departure times. Staff have all the necessary information to enable them to make contact with a parent if a child is unwell during a session. Children clearly understand routines because staff are rigorous in the way they use time during the morning. The day is planned carefully and children are secure in the knowledge of what will happen at particular times. A good record system ensures that children have sufficient opportunities to learn key skills and all areas of learning for children under the age of five years are covered regularly. This ensures that a broad curriculum is offered.

Leadership and management is good. An effective team spirit between staff allows them to work together well. Staff do not often leave and so children benefit from forming stable relationships at the playgroup. Most of the staff are suitably qualified and the manager has a Level 4 qualification. Two other members of staff have a Level 2 qualification and one other is working towards this qualification. Induction of new staff is effectively planned. Monitoring of the quality of provision and use of self-evaluation are good. The playgroup's leadership is well aware of the strengths and areas for development. For example, the development of resources for the outside area has already been identified as an area which would benefit from extra equipment. The leadership is effectively committed to making further improvements to what the playgroup is providing, including the use of assessment to create more detailed personal targets for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the playgroup was asked to devise a clear policy, which is understood by all staff, regarding the procedure to be followed in the event of a child becoming lost, obtain written permission from parents for trained staff to administer first aid and ensure that parents receive regular oral information on their child's progress. The group has devised a clear policy, which is understood by all staff, regarding the procedure to be followed in the event of a child becoming lost. Written permission from parents for trained staff to administer first aid is gained. Parents receive regular oral information on their child's progress. These developments mean that children's health and safety and education have been improved successfully.

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

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve resources for outside play and reading books
- make sure that drinks of water are easily accessible to children throughout the session.

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):

- develop a more detailed tracking system to ensure that staff always know how to extend children's learning throughout each session
- record children's personal targets more effectively and share them with parents in a way that will assist them to regularly support their child's learning.

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