### Priory Park Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<tr>
<th><strong>Unique Reference Number</strong></th>
<th>221743</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection date</strong></td>
<td>04 March 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inspector</strong></td>
<td>Veronica Sharpe</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Setting Address</strong></th>
<th>Almond Road, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 1DZ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telephone number</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Registered person</strong></td>
<td>Priory Park Playgroup</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Type of inspection</strong></td>
<td>Integrated</td>
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<td><strong>Type of care</strong></td>
<td>Full day care</td>
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This inspection was carried out under the provisions of Part XA of the Children Act 1989, as inserted by the Care Standards Act 2000
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:

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<th>The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.</th>
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WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Priory Park Playgroup opened in 1979, it is a registered charity managed by a voluntary committee of parents. The playgroup operates from a mobile building located in the grounds of Priory Park infant school in St. Neots, Cambridgeshire. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting is registered to provide care for no more than 38 children aged between two and five years of age. There are currently 100 children on roll, this includes 79 who are eligible for early years funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and some who speak English as an additional language.

The setting opens each weekday during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 11:45 and 12:30 until 15:00. The group employs 15 members of staff work to with the children, 13 of these have appropriate early years qualifications and four members of staff are currently working towards a qualification.

The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

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Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from cross-infection by rigorous hygiene routines, for example, tables are wiped before meals and older children are encouraged to wash their hands independently. All staff have first aid training so children receive appropriate treatment in event of an accident. Records of accidents are shared with parents and monitored to inform the risk assessment. Suitable systems ensure children have medication administered according to their parents’ wishes.

Children learn to appreciate the benefits of active physical play as they chase after bubbles, play running games or move to ‘Sticky Kids’. Activities are well planned to offer a good variety of outdoor experiences, such as pedalling wheeled toys, using balls and bats, or balancing on beams. This enables children to develop their large muscles whilst having fun. Weekly use of the school hall gives them further opportunities to play action games and practise other skills, such as dancing, jumping and stretching. Children use a wide range of small tools to develop their hand to eye coordination, such as scissors, pens, pencils and play dough cutters.

Children enjoy a varied range of snacks, such as fresh fruit, vegetables, sandwiches, muffins or crackers. Parents provide a packed lunch for those children who attend the lunch club and staff offer guidance to ensure a healthy selection of food. A water cooler in each of the rooms means children access drinking water throughout the sessions, keeping themselves well hydrated. Children eat their snacks and meals in a friendly, social environment, although the set times impact on their ability to extend their play and learning. Staff collect information from parents and carers about food allergies and preferences so children eat safely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a safe and well-organised care and learning environment. Close staff supervision and a well-established risk assessment ensure children play safely. Children are encouraged to use the resources and play areas safely, for example, they help to tidy away in order to avoid trip hazards. Staff are deployed effectively so they supervise the children and remind them to move around the setting safely both indoors and out.

A well-organised range of good quality play and learning materials supports children’s development appropriately and enables them to enjoy their activities. However the range of additional accessible resources is limited and this hinders children’s opportunities to extend and develop their own learning.

Staff attend training in child protection so they know how to keep children safe from harm. A suitable child protection procedure is in place, although it needs some amending in order to fully comply with the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children show good relationships with their carers and benefit from good quality adult–child interactions that encourage their learning. They clearly enjoy each other’s company and play

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together happily. Children explore a good range of resources and have fun as they participate in creative and interesting activities. They develop their physical confidence during active outdoor games and enjoy times in the fresh air every day.

Children of all ages use a wide range of materials, for instance younger children use slime, gloop and play dough, whilst older children make a ‘volcano’ from clay. Children enjoy books and stories, for example, they find out about the three little pigs and make a big house from blocks that they can ‘huff and puff and blow down’. They listen to ‘Percy the park keeper’ with interest and laugh together as they find how the hedgehog can play with balloons.

Staff use the ‘Birth to three matters’ framework to plan for younger children’s activities, they find out what children enjoy so activities are interesting and relevant. Records of development are shared with parents so they know about their children’s progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff show a good understanding of how children learn and provide a wide range of activities that children enjoy. Daily evidence of children’s learning is collected and used effectively to inform planning so children’s needs can be met and as a result they make good progress. Children manage their own behaviour well, they enjoy interacting with their peers and understand the rules for harmonious relationships, such as when to say ‘sorry’ or share an activity. This promotes their learning. Sometimes the routines of the sessions impact on children’s ability to concentrate and finish what they are doing and additional resources are not always easily available, which limits their ability to extend their play and learning independently.

Children use robotic toys confidently, they make them move left and right and can operate the controls independently. They use a mouse to navigate suitable programmes on the computer and have easy access to hole punches and staplers. This improves their understanding of technology. Children show excitement and wonder as they make big bubbles in the garden and understand how the wind carries them away. They talk about weather and the seasons and go for walks to look at natural things to help them learn about the wider world. They make ‘volcanoes’ from clay and eagerly wait for them to dry so they can experiment with safe household chemicals that make the ‘volcanoes erupt’. A good range of materials help children learn about colour, texture and consistency, such as sand, water, play dough and paint. They create their own pictures using paint, pencils and crayons and enjoy seeing the results displayed on their own art boards.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children settle in happily and enjoy playing, exploring and sharing their ideas. Staff support children successfully in developing desirable behaviour as, for instance, they encourage sharing by discussion and good role modelling. Children learn caring attitudes as they help to tidy away or take turns to serve their friends with cups and plates at snack times. During free-flow play sessions children have good opportunities to follow their own interests and develop their skills, but at other times the routines of the sessions inhibit their ability to extend their play and finish self-chosen tasks.

Children learn about diversity as they play with a good range of resources and activities that reflect the wider world, such as dressing up, books and small world toys. Children who have

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English as an additional language are welcomed into the setting because staff take time to learn and understand key words and phrases that help children feel at home. One-to-one support is offered to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities where possible and the staff work with parents and other professionals to ensure children’s needs are met. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents of children who receive early education funding is outstanding. The setting works very effectively with parents in order to support children’s learning and achievements. Clear written information is provided for parents on their children’s activities and they know about the themes and topics through newsletters and the notice boards. Parents contribute what they know about their children and staff use this information when planning for children’s next steps. Frequent consultations and informal meetings mean parents know about their children’s progress towards the early learning goals as well as their overall health and well-being.

Parents and carers speak positively about the setting and staff, they say staff work enthusiastically with them to ensure children are well cared for. Policies and procedures are easily accessible so parents and carers know about the ethos of the setting, however the complaints procedure does not fully comply with current regulations, which potentially impacts on parents’ ability to express concerns about their children’s care.

**Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The setting is well organised so children enjoy a wide variety of stimulating games and activities. All required documentation is in place to promote children’s health, welfare and safety; although some of the policies and procedures needs updating so they comply with current regulations. Staff work effectively as a team and, in spite of the part-time working patterns, manage a successful key worker system that ensures children and families receive individual support, which contributes positively to children’s overall care and learning.

The leadership and management of the early years education is good. The manager monitors the practice and leads staff effectively so children benefit well from the successful learning programme. Staff are confident and effective teachers who show a sound knowledge and understanding of how children learn. The staff enjoy good support from the management committee who help to ensure there are frequent opportunities for continuous professional development. Ongoing evaluation of the setting and the early learning programme means areas for development are identified in order to improve the quality of the provision. Overall children’s needs are met.

**Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the registered person was asked to improve ways to ensure children do not spend too much time sitting and waiting at snack times. Children have set times for snack, where they sit together and contribute actively in that they help with handing out cups and plates. Staff sit with them to engage them in conversation so they are usefully occupied. However, the routines of the session, including snack times still limits children’s ability to make independent choices and follow their own interests. There is, therefore, a similar recommendation made at this inspection.

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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.

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 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 policies and procedures are improved so they comply with current legislation.

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 children’s independent learning by increasing the range of accessible resources and ensuring routines promote children’s opportunities to make their own decisions (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