

Brayford Square Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119555
Inspection date	19 December 2007
Inspector	Marcia Robinson
Setting Address	6 Brayford Square, London, E1 0SG
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Registered person	The Trustees of Brayford Square Playgroup
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?

Brayford Square Playgroup is a committee run group. It opened in 1978 and operates from a purpose built single storey building, situated on the Exmouth estate in Stepney in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. A maximum of 16 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup operates two sessions per day, between the hours of 09.15 to 11.45 and 12:30 to 15:00, during term time.

There are currently 28 children on roll, including 13 children who receive nursery education funding. The preschool supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup employs two members of staff, including the manager, who both hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the Early Years Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an environment that is maintained to a good standard of hygiene and cleanliness. Their health is promoted sufficiently well throughout the setting with some good hygiene and cleaning practises in place. For instance, children are learning about good hygiene and cleanliness because staff encourage them to visit the bathroom and to wash their hands at the appropriate times to prevent any infections. Staff also follow good hygiene procedures, throughout the session. They wipe tables with anti-bacterial spray and any spillages are cleared away immediately, thus minimising the risk of cross infection. However, staff do not always give explanations to children about the importance of hand washing. Children are learning about how their bodies work through planned activities including visits from the dentists and topics about 'me and my body'. A clear sickness policy and information about the exclusion of sick children is shared with parents. All members of staff hold a current first aid qualification, this together with a generally well stocked first aid box and parental consents for urgent medical treatment, means staff can give appropriate care if there is an accident or emergency. Suitable records are kept supporting children's health and welfare, including an accident record book, containing all of the required details. However, staff do not always ensure that parents sign the accident record to confirm they have been notified and there is currently no system in place for recording medication given to children. Children enjoy varied and nutritious snacks, such as fresh fruit, toasted wholemeal bread, bread sticks and raisins. Staff obtain information from parents to ensure these meet special dietary needs and ensure children remain healthy. Children ask for drinks when they are thirsty, as well as having diluted juice and water available at snack times, but free access to drinking water throughout the day is not available to ensure children's self-help skills and general well-being is fully promoted. Children have good daily opportunities for fresh air and vigorous play as they climb, balance and slide on climbing equipment that is set out, indoors. They also have access to safe outdoor play, where children are showing an awareness of movement and space as they stop under control when playing running games in the garden.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents are greeted warmly by staff as they enter the playgroup. The use of displays, photographs and children's work makes the playgroup warm and welcoming to children and their parents and carers. Children benefit from playing in a spacious well-organised environment, because staff ensure the layout of activities and resources ensures children can move around in comfort and ease. Children enjoy using an open plan play room, which is divided up into designated play areas, allowing them opportunities to be active or quiet and engage in creative, physical, table top and floor activities. Staff are well deployed and ratios are maintained but visitors to the playgroup are not always asked to sign the record book which does not fully promote children's security. Children do however, participate in all the activities provided as furniture and equipment are carefully selected to ensure they are safe, accessible and appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children are learning about safety and accident prevention because staff give good explanations and make children aware of their own safety, through, for example, practising regular fire drills and applying simple rules, such as no running whilst inside. Staff carry out daily risk assessments for indoors and outdoors to minimise hazards and ensure the safety of the children. However, formal risk assessments are not always effective in identifying all areas and aspects of safety, such as equipment, security

and outings. The manager is fully aware of her responsibility to report concerns to Ofsted and all staff are able to implement the playgroup procedures in the event of children not being collected or concerns being raised. However, staff lack knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and are not aware of the Local Children's Safeguarding Procedures, which may compromise their ability to fully protect children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff greet and welcome the parents and children at the playgroup door. Some of the younger children are supported in leaving their parents while the older children arrive happy and confident. They quickly settle in to the routine of making their own choices about their play and they are encouraged to explore the range of resources at their own pace to build their confidence. Most of the range of resources available for children's development is appropriate but there is a limited range of constructional resources available during the sessions to effectively promote their needs. Children do, however, benefit from a flexible routine, including a balance of child-centred and adult-led activities. The implementation of a successful key worker system helps to secure relationships and build a sense of trust, between parents, children and staff.

Children spend their time purposefully by engaging well in their play. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of how children learn and consequently provide an appropriate range of activities and resources to encourage progress in all areas of development. The Birth to three matters framework is used to plan younger children's activities but it is not consistently used to inform their next stage of development. As a result, the planning and observation records do not clearly show children's development over a period of time.

Staff interact well with the children, they are kind and caring towards them and show they are interested in what they have to say. For example, as they chat together at circle time and during activities they make frequent use of humour and praise and encouragement. As a result, children's confidence and self-esteem is growing. Children also play well independently and with their peers, as well as enjoying opportunities to work more directly with staff, such as while painting and doing puzzles.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have an acceptable knowledge of the Foundation Stage and its implementation, although in-depth understanding is not secure. This is reflected in the planning for the curriculum which consists of medium, long and short term plans which is mainly based on the headings for the areas of learning. Staff plan the curriculum together and they observe and record children's progress frequently, although these are not evaluated along the stepping stones. However, systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching, the impact on children's individual progress and assessments, are not yet fully developed. As a result, the planning of activities lacks detail because it does not make reference to the individual clusters in each area, include daily focussed activities or clearly show learning intentions. This is also evident in aspects of children's learning that are not always fully promoted or extended. For instance, although there is access to a home corner and shop which is used to develop children's imaginative play and to promote their language and communication skills, staff have not considered other aspects of learning, such as literacy that can be incorporated into the home corner to help children independently imitate writing for a purpose. However, staff's thematic approach to planning means that children access a sufficient range of activities and experiences. For instance, activities are linked to topics, such

as 'seasons'. Here, children enjoy exploring the outdoor environment, collecting leaves which they use to create their own sticking display inside.

Children's artworks, drawings and displays are available to show the range of activities they have been involved in over a period of time. These indicate children make satisfactory progress along the stepping stones.

Children's imaginative and creative skills are developing, as they have opportunities to express their feelings through a range of musical instruments. Children enjoy singing a familiar range of songs and nursery rhymes, such as 'twinkle, twinkle little star' during circle time sessions. Children use their imagination and express their ideas in a variety of ways, such as acting out real life scenarios in the home corner and free painting and drawing is available, everyday. Children are able to access some resources for themselves, for example, hole punchers, staplers and envelopes. They also have sufficient opportunities to build and construct their own designs using stickle bricks. However, children do not have access to water play everyday to build on their creative experiences.

Children are making good progress in their mathematical development. This is because they have frequent opportunities to learn about the concepts of numbers, colours, and size. Children enjoy counting how many fingers and pieces of fruit, during free play and snack time. They are talking about colours and shapes when using a variety of tools and objects in the sand. Children benefit from regular opportunities to consolidate their learning through daily routines. For example, they are confident at counting how many pieces of pear, as staff present it to them whole, in half and then as quarter, during snack time. They also enjoy singing their favourite number rhymes, such as '1,2,3,4,5 once I caught a fish alive'.

Some aspects of children's personal, social and emotional development are good, for instance, children are confident with staff and with each other, they greet each other and staff on arrival and happily engage in conversation with their peers and adults. Children are developing their self help skills with regard to visiting the toilet and dressing up for home time and when going out to play. Children show they are competent in sharing and taking turns, during free play and group time sessions, where they sit together and engage in conversations about past and present events thus developing their social skills. They are developing their self help skills with regard to helping to wipe the tables after messy play, visiting the toilet and putting on their coats when going out to play. However, other aspects of children's self help skills, such as opportunities to pour their own drinks, handing out fruits to their peers at snack time and for older children, helping to prepare their snacks, are less well enhanced.

Children are making satisfactory progress in their physical development. They move confidently in and outdoors, showing an awareness of space and others around them. They are developing their fine manipulative skills when using pencils, scissors or play dough equipment. They have good opportunities to find out about the importance of staying healthy through the daily snack time routine and topics about 'me and my body'. However, opportunities for children to develop their physical skills using a wider range of interesting and challenging activities is less well ensured in the planning of outdoor play within the Foundation Stage.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Information is sought from parents relating to children's individual needs, these are appropriately recorded on the playgroup's registration forms to ensure consistency. Children are developing

a good sense of self esteem and appreciation of each other through the resources and activities offered, including posters, books, puzzles and the celebration of different religious beliefs including Chinese New Year. Children are developing an awareness of their local environment because staff take them to the local shops and farm. In addition, children also enjoy visits from local professionals such as the Dentist.

There are appropriate systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities, although supporting documents, such as the Code of Practice is not available as a reference tool for staff.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's behaviour is good because staff are consistently good role models for them. Staff treat each other and the children with respect and give them clear explanations if their behaviour is unacceptable. This helps children to learn to understand right from wrong. Staff frequently use praise and positive language to promote good behaviour. As a result, children are forming caring relationships with staff and each other and are learning to play co-operatively, share and take turns. Children's social skills are developing well because staff are always polite and respectful when they speak to them. They encourage them to have good manners. For example, they praise children when they remember to say 'please' and 'thank' you at snack time.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from the close relationships staff have with parents who are encouraged to be involved in the playgroup as some form part of the management committee and also help with fundraising events. Parents spoken to say they are very happy with the care provided, they particularly find staff approachable and caring. Information about the Foundation Stage and the areas of learning are available for parents to look at in the form of the planning materials. They also have access to some information about the group's operation which is available on the notice board. Children's individual needs are documented upon entry and staff are available to exchange information daily. Although, systems to inform parents about their children's achievements and progress in the six areas of learning is planned for, it has not yet been implemented. Consequently parents are not formally updated with the progress their children are making during their time at playgroup to ensure they can participate fully in their child's learning. However, the group have a complaints procedure which is understood by staff and shared with parents, it is not well maintained with the correct contact details for the regulator and there is currently no systems in place for logging complaints in line with new guidance.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager leads by being a role model and working hands-on with her staff. She utilises the strengths of individual staff by sharing and delegating different areas of responsibility, such as relating to Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Staff work well together as a team where they are supported in their work through opportunities to take up training. Some clear communication systems are in place, such as daily discussions and informal staff meetings. However, there are no robust systems, such as staff appraisals to monitor the quality of teaching and identify staff training needs to support children's learning. Despite this, the play leader has correctly identified some of the areas of weakness and demonstrates a commitment to improving outcomes for children.

Children are happy and confident because the playgroup has a very committed stable staff team who communicate their enjoyment and care for the children. Good ratios and effective

staff deployment means that children are cared for in an organised environment where they are appropriately supported by staff who are sensitive to their needs. The group's suitable recruitment and vetting procedures ensures staff are experienced and qualified to care for young children. Children are protected because the setting ensures that they are not left in sole charge of un vetted persons and staff are aware of some significant events that Ofsted must be notified about.

The records, policies, and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision and for promotion of the welfare, care and learning of children, are mostly in place. Records are satisfactorily maintained, although the recording of children's late arrivals or departures are at times incomplete and the accident record book does not always contain parental signatures. In addition, there is a lack of written procedures and records in place in case they are required to administer medication. Not all policies are available to parents as they are currently being reviewed, although these are understood and implemented well by staff. However, some policies and procedures have not been reviewed for some time, including formal risk assessments and the special needs statement, which are not consistent with guidance. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection the playgroup was asked to update the child protection policy with the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and include the regulators details in the complaints procedure. The child protection policy has been updated but the complaints procedure is yet to be updated with the correct contact details for the regulator. This, therefore remains to be met and has been raised again as a recommendation.

At the last nursery education inspection it was recommended that: the group improve the programme for literacy to include varied opportunities within play situation for children to practise their early writing skills and; that they further develop the programme for mathematics to provide challenge for older or more able children through the use of mathematical language and questioning during everyday activities. Although, the playgroup have made good progress in developing the programme for mathematics with opportunities provided in everyday activities and routines, the programme for literacy still needs developing with regards to more opportunities for children to practise their early writing skills. This, therefore remains to be further developed and has been raised again as a recommendation at this inspection.

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 the organisation, by ensuring all records and procedures required for the efficient and safe management of the provision are in place and maintained to the required standard
- increase staff's knowledge and understanding about child protection issues and how to implement Local Safeguarding Children's Procedures
- ensure all children have free access to drinking water throughout the day

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):

- reassess systems of communication with parents in order to provide more opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's learning and introduce formal systems for updating parents of their children's achievements and progress in the six areas of learning
- develop the use of staff appraisals to monitor the quality of teaching and to identify staff's future training needs
- continue to develop the planning and evaluation to ensure that every aspect of each area of learning is planned and included in the curriculum for children and; further develop the recording of children's progress (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