

Tiptree Pre-School Playgroup, Baynards

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	402220
Inspection date	04 December 2007
Inspector	Karen Pretty
Setting Address	Baynards Primary School, Townsend Road, Tiptree, Essex, CO5 0ND
Telephone number	01621 818520
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Registered person	The Trustees of Tiptree Pre School 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 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?

Tiptree Pre-School Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of local people and parents of children at the group, past and present. It opened in 1977 and operates from a purpose built classroom adjoining Baynards Primary School in Tiptree, Essex. The group have the sole use of the premises during session times. This comprises of a play room, kitchen, store room and cloakroom facilities. A maximum of 24 children aged from two to under five years may attend the group at any one time. Sessions are offered during term time from 09:15 to 11:45 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and from 09:15 to 12:45 on Tuesday to provide a lunch club. Two afternoon sessions are offered from 12:45 to 15:15 on Monday and Wednesday. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. The group serves the village and surrounding local area. The group currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group employs eight members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification. The group receives support from the local authority and is also a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good health and hygiene practices through the regular routines of the session. For example, they carry out hand washing before eating lunch and after going to the toilet. However, at snack time children use wipes for convenience which does not fully reinforce these effective practices and develop their understanding of why these procedures are important. Neither do staff routinely chat to the children about why hand washing is important. Children confidently take tissues from the boxes supplied to wipe their noses and then place their used tissues in the dustbin. Consequently, their risk of cross-infection is minimised and children stay healthy. Most staff have attended food hygiene training and consistently follow good procedures when preparing or serving food, for example, wearing blue gloves and using anti bacterial spray on the surfaces and tables.

Children receive good quality care if they are ill or have an accident because staff are aware of their individual health care needs and all the required documentation and consents are in place to support this. Staff have regular opportunities to attend first aid training as part of their ongoing professional development, therefore, they are aware of the correct procedures to follow to maintain children's health. The accident records are well organised, each one is discussed and signed when the child is collected.

Children's dietary needs are well met through the provision of a mid-morning snack that takes account of their individual dietary needs and preferences. The group have achieved a 'snack attack' award for their dedication to promoting healthy eating. Children sit down together in a group to enjoy items such as apples, raisins and carrots followed by a biscuit. These snacks are presented in a bowl which is passed around the table and continues to circulate until all the food has gone. Therefore, children are putting their hands in their mouth and then back into the bowl to select another snack which increases the risk of cross-infection. Children have a choice of milk, orange or blackcurrant squash to drink at snack time, staff pour drinks for children which creates a missed opportunity to develop children's independent skills. Furthermore, children do not have constant access to fresh drinking water throughout the session and consequently, could become dehydrated.

Children enjoy a good range of physical play activities which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. There is a well developed outdoor area where they use a broad range of toys and equipment such as bats and balls, footballs, wheeled toys and a climbing frame. Sometimes children practise their balancing skills while moving a small ball around a standing maze board or walking with an egg and spoon. Children demonstrate increasing control while placing small puzzle pieces together, using a variety of mark marking tools and while practising their threading skills, these activities all help them develop their hand-eye coordination. Daily music and movement sessions provide great opportunities for children to develop control of their bodies and spatial awareness. They participate in favourite directional songs such as 'bananas, bananas' and 'one day my boss' which require clicking, flicking, kicking, clapping and nodding. An attractive quiet area is available for children who wish to rest or simply take time out from the session to share books one to one with staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment. Children are only allowed to be collected by nominated people and a password system is used if staff have not met the authorised person previously. The main entrance door to the playgroup is kept locked during session times and the outside of the entrance can be closely supervised from the window to ensure unwanted visitors do not gain access. Well-implemented policies and procedures are effectively followed to promote children's safety in the playgroup and when on outings into the local community. All fire safety equipment is regularly checked by professional agencies to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Frequent emergency evacuations are practised with the children and staff to ensure everyone concerned knows what to do in the event of a fire.

Staff create a very welcoming and stimulating environment. The building is attractively decorated with posters and examples of children's own artwork which they proudly point to. The layout of the playroom provides children with space to move around freely and safely and encourages their independence, for example, children confidently access the toilet and hand washing facilities. Well-organised child-friendly accessible storage facilities enable children to self-select from the broad range of safe and suitable toys and equipment that are well-maintained and meet safety standards.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted because all staff have a good, up to date knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in protecting children. Effective procedures are in place to ensure all staff are aware of the procedures to follow if they have a concern and contact numbers are readily available.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy and settle well, those who are new or less confident are sensitively supported by staff to do so in the welcoming environment. Children form good relationships with each other, they eagerly greet their friends as they arrive and excitedly show them what they are doing and quickly include others in their already established play. Children are confident and display high levels of self-esteem, they can play well on their own or with others. Dressing up in their favourite outfits or as characters is a popular small group activity with most of the children. Staff are supportive and caring towards the children and take time to listen to them, this helps children develop a sense of self-worth as they know staff value their contributions and are genuinely interested in what they say and do. The organisation of activities and routines of the session encourage children to initiate their own play and follow their own interests, as they freely choose to spend their time engaged in activities that interest and motivate them.

The group are developing the use of 'Birth to three matters' and use to support their practice with this age group. They use a good system to observe and record children's achievement and progression following the framework. The framework is beginning to be reflected in their planning and staff informally adapt activities to ensure younger children are able to participate and make progress. For example, they provide a cosy cushioned area with books and soft toys for children to retreat and place a strong emphasis on sensory play which enables younger children to explore with their senses, yet extension opportunities for older children are endless. Children understand the routines of the group and come together happily for group activities such as story and singing time, equally staff effectively split them into groups at other times

to ensure everyone is able to join in and contribute. The effective key person system ensures children always have a familiar face and trusted adult to support their individual needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play ensures children are motivated and engaged in a broad range of developmentally appropriate activities. Staff use their good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn to provide a stimulating environment which reflects all children's background and the wider community and is based upon their interests. Staff use an effective range of teaching methods to motivate children so all children are keen to learn and make progress such as open-ended questions and effective challenge strategies. They use successful strategies to engage and interest children, for example, at story time using props to encourage their interest and participation when introducing the Christmas Nativity. Staff constantly join in with children's play, getting down to their level, to extend their learning and they informally adapt activities to provide children with realistic challenge.

Planning is based on topics and is balanced across the six areas of learning and is linked to appropriate stepping stones. Assessment is based upon meaningful observations recorded in children's records of progress. However, they have not yet devised an effective system of evaluating these records to formally identify children's next step in learning to use as an aid to future planning. Staff manage children's behaviour effectively and provide them with good strategies to help them learn to manage their own behaviour.

Children genuinely enjoy their time at the setting. They have a positive attitude to learning and become confident and self-assured in their play, negotiating and interacting well with their peers to share ideas and experiences. They develop their self-esteem and take great pride in their achievements, for example, actively seeking out staff to show them what they have done. Children play together well cooperating and offering their own suggestions when in the large well-resourced role play area, for example, counting out food items and taking money for the till. They have good pencil control, for example, when copying their name to label their own pictures and make excellent use of descriptive language when explaining their choice of song when they cannot remember the title.

Most children confidently recognise their own name when finding their coat peg or match with their place at the snack table and make good use of the well-resourced writing area. They use mathematical language during their play and often practise their counting skills. Children enjoy activities such as counting the number of adults and children and then finding the corresponding number to proudly display, this develops their number recognition. Some children demonstrate simple calculation skills when adding together food items in the role play area. Children competently display their skills when independently using the computer and operate everyday technology as part of their play. For example, they enjoy talking to each other on the telephone in the home corner.

Children take part in activities to learn about living things and growing which develops their awareness of change. Regular opportunities are provided to cook and make play dough, allowing children to experiment with changing states and texture. They make good use of their imagination in planned and spontaneous role play situations both inside and out. They explore their creativity while experimenting with a range of media and materials when making Christmas lanterns and sticking scrunched up tissue paper onto the tree for their Christmas display. Overall,

children make good progress in their learning and achieve well given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The playgroup successfully provides an inclusive provision which reflects all children's backgrounds and the wider community, this helps children develop a good sense of belonging. They regularly celebrates cultural and religious festivals through planned activities and additional equipment and resources, most recently props have been used to explain and introduce the Christmas Nativity. All children are valued and included and have equal opportunity to access resources and equipment that meet their individual needs, so they can become confident and independent. The key person system ensures children acquire social confidence through spending time with a familiar and trusted adult. Staff recognise the importance of children's individuality as they work closely with parents to ensure each child's personal characteristics and preferences are respected, this also helps them to develop and promote their role and identity within the playgroup. Displays of children's work helps children feel valued and included.

Effective arrangements are in place to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The playgroup is proactive in ensuring children receive good levels of support, with a designated member of staff attending specific training, this enables them to meet children's individual needs and further develop their understanding of the code of practice. The playgroup is committed to working with parents and other professionals to ensure children's needs are met and planning takes account of children's individual targets. Staff provide children, with English as an additional language, with extra support and encouragement as necessary and share information with parents to ensure all children are able to participate within the provision. Familiar words are linked to signs which empowers all children with the skills to communicate their individual needs without the necessity of language.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are learning right from wrong and to show respect for others. They are learning responsible behaviour because staff are good role models and use calm and consistent strategies throughout the playgroup appropriate to children's stage of development such as providing children with carpet squares to define their own space at group time. Staff actively empower children with the skills to make their opinions known and enable them to solve minor behaviour disputes by themselves, for example, using sand timers and 'first and then' boards. Staff consistently praise children by name, for example, thanking them for putting the cars back into the box and leaving the floor safe, so others will not slip. A good system is in place to record any behaviour incidents and these are subsequently signed by parents.

Parents receive good, accurate information about the running of the provision and are kept up to date with any changes through regular newsletters and via notice boards. A welcome brochure is full of useful information to help parents understand the routines and ethos of the playgroup. Their views are sought and acted upon via questionnaires with emphasis on their opinions regarding care and education. Effective settling-in procedures and the daily exchange of information between parents and staff ensures children's changing needs are met and provides continuity of care. A clear complaints procedure provides parents with all the necessary information should they wish to make any concerns known.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is good. Parents receive full information about the Foundation Stage in the setting's prospectus and via displays.

They are informed about the weekly plans through short term plans which are displayed on the wall of the room each session. Further information about long and medium term planning is provided through the regular and informative newsletters they receive. Parents can view their child's achievement records at any time, however, there is no formal system for parents to regularly access these and make ongoing contributions. Parents make positive comments on how well their children have developed at the playgroup and appreciate the commitment of the staff. Children's starting points are discussed with parents and previous records of achievement are used to define individual educational needs. Therefore, children's learning is enhanced through a good working partnership.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The playgroup is well organised to provide a welcoming and child-friendly environment where children develop well across all areas and their individual interests are recognised. The staff and management committee are dedicated to raising all outcomes for children. Space is used well and children are happy, relaxed and settled within the setting. They have sufficient space to move around in comfort and safety. Staff are well deployed and supervise all the children well. There is a successful recruitment policy in place which ensures all staff who are employed are checked for their suitability and undergo a thorough induction process. Staff wear uniforms and identification badges so they are easily recognised by children and parents. Annual appraisals are held for each staff member which enables them and management to highlight their skills and to discuss any further training they may benefit from. This ensures their knowledge and understanding of childcare practice is kept up to date and their skills and interests are developed further. Staff have a good awareness and understanding of the setting's policies and follow procedures to ensure consistency of care for all children. All relevant documentation is well organised, maintained and is readily available for inspection.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The supervisor is proactive in acknowledging areas for improvement to nursery education and is working closely with staff and the local authority support teacher to ensure they continue to develop these areas such as planning and assessments. She has already attended training related to the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage and this has started to influence the planning documentation. The supervisor delegates responsibilities well to all staff. For example, all staff are involved in all aspects of the planning and share responsibility for producing evaluated documentation each week. All staff are included in the planning process and there are good links with the local schools, this promotes children's smooth transition from playgroup to the reception class. They also encourage parents to share their child's developmental records with the reception teacher to ensure children have the necessary skills to enable them to settle in quickly. Regular meetings allow management and staff to discuss their ideas and suggestions to ensure consistency of care and practice is maintained.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the group was required to: ensure Ofsted's contact details are available to parents and carers should they wish to refer a complaint; develop staff knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. A poster is available in

the entrance clearly showing Ofsted's contact number and the full address is included in the written policy which is shared with and readily available to parents. Staff all regularly attend child protection training, this provides all the relevant information to ensure their knowledge and skills are up to date. Through discussion staff demonstrate an appropriate knowledge and level of understanding of related issues and how to make any concerns known.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection, to improve the nursery education, the group was required to: increase the links between the planning and assessment records, the stepping stones and early learning goals, so that full coverage of all areas is more readily identifiable and can be effectively monitored; build on the staff confidence and use of the related terminology. At the time of the last inspection the staff were just beginning to familiarise themselves with the Foundation Stage and the related terminology after the recent introduction of the document. Staff were given and still do have opportunities to attend short courses related to planning, assessment and implementation, therefore their knowledge of the document is greatly enhanced and effectively used as part of the everyday practice.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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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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 fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- review procedures at snack time to give children further opportunities to develop their independence and further promote their understanding of good health and hygiene practices.

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 the assessment and evaluation of children's progress to identify next steps in their learning and to inform future planning
- devise and implement a system to encourage parents to access their children's developmental records and make ongoing contributions.

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