

St Brendans Parish Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220068
Inspection date	14 March 2008
Inspector	Andrea Ewer
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Registered person	St Brendan's Parish 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?

St Brendan's Parish Playgroup is a committee-run group which opened in 1992. It operates from St Brendan's Catholic Infant School, on the Beanfield estate in Corby. The playgroup is registered to provide 20 places for children aged between two years and under five years. The playgroup is open five mornings per week and Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons during school term time. Sessions last from 09.00 to 11:30 and 12.30 to 15.00. The playgroup serves the local community.

There are currently 35 children on roll 30 of whom are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The playgroup supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language.

A total of four staff work directly with the children. Two of whom hold a relevant early years qualification and two who are working towards a qualification.

The playgroup receives support from a local authority advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Good attention is given to promoting children's good health. The premises are clean and tidy and staff carry out sound hygiene routines to maintain standards throughout each session. The weekly cleaning rota ensures toys and equipment are cleaned regularly and the bathroom is well stocked with soap and paper towels. Children understand the importance of washing their hands at appropriate times because staff talk to them about washing the germs away and remind them to wash their hands before eating. This effectively reduces the risk of cross-infection. Children receive appropriate care in the event of minor accidents or illness. Most staff hold an up-to-date first aid qualification and a well-stocked first aid kit is readily accessible. Accident and medicine records are signed and the required written consent is obtained from parents to administer medicine and seek emergency medical advice or treatment. Some accident records lack sufficient detail which does not fully promote children's good health.

Children enjoy the many opportunities to develop their physical skills and expend energy both inside and outdoors. Children move around with confidence and enthusiastically join in action songs and rhymes with increased coordination. They run around energetically as they chase the bubbles during outdoor play and improve control of their bodies as they push and ride wheeled toys.

Children are developing a very good understanding of healthy eating and their dietary needs are well catered for. They enjoy nutritious snacks that contribute very well to their healthy growth and development. Children choose from a selection of fresh fruit and chopped vegetables and become increasingly confident in their own abilities as they make their own sandwiches at snack time. Staff introduce foods children are not familiar with to develop their taste, such as fruits from other countries including pineapple. Children help themselves to fresh drinking water as they require. Children who have special dietary needs are well catered for. Information is obtained from parents and used to plan and provide suitable snacks that ensures their good health is never compromised.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome in the child-centred environment where overall their safety and welfare are promoted well. Brightly coloured posters, displays of children's art work and imaginatively set out rooms that take account of children's interests, give them a strong sense of belonging. Children benefit from a wide range of good quality toys and equipment that meets their play and development needs well. They play comfortably at child-sized tables and select additional resources of their choice, from low-level shelves which supports them to develop their play and ideas. Overall effective measures are in place to maintain children's safety and prevent accidents. Staff are deployed well and the premises are secure. Although risk assessments are carried out for outings and some systems are in place to prevent accidents and maintain children's safety indoors, they lack detail to show potential hazards on the premises and any action taken. This does not fully promote children's safety.

Children are well protected from harm or neglect because staff have a secure understanding of their role in and how to implement safeguarding children procedures. The clearly written

child protection policy, and supporting documentation is displayed and shared with parents to keep them fully informed of staff's responsibility to protect children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Overall children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff use their secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan and provide an exciting and stimulating range of activities and some excellent practical experiences. For example, groups of children visit the local nature reserve where they make homes for birds and mice and sit around the camp listening to stories about nature and the natural environment. This helps develop children's knowledge of their environment and fosters confidence and positive self-esteem. Observation and assessment records are used effectively to plan the next steps for individual children's learning, and all children are well supported to reach their potential. Information obtained from parents about what children know and can do when they enter the Foundation Stage is limited. This restricts staff's ability to plan and provide activities that meets their individual needs when they start at the playgroup. Planning, however, is based on the six areas of learning and the interesting range of activities help children become independent and gain confidence in their own abilities. Space, time and resources are used very well, take account of children's interests and allow them to develop their play and ideas in a safe, enabling environment. For example, children choose which activity to join and when to have their snack which successfully supports them to become independent. Children benefit from effective support from staff who interact warmly with them and use a variety of teaching methods to promote their learning. Staff use open ended questions, respond to children's interests and use clear explanations that helps them think, develop their language and learn. Individual children are clearly identified in planning to make sure all children receive appropriate challenge and meet their development needs. Activities are evaluated each day and shows clearly where learning intentions have been met. Children have regular contact with the reception class through celebrating festivals together and visits from the teachers. This promotes a consistent approach to their learning, helps children look forward to moving up to reception class and supports them well to settle in to school quickly.

Children are confident, highly motivated and make very good links in their learning as staff skilfully incorporate the theme into many activities provided. They play cooperatively in the inviting and imaginatively set out indoor garden where they enjoy planting spring bulbs in pots, 'cut' the green rug that represents the grass using the lawnmower and use gardening tools to dig the soil and find the plastic insects. Children actively participate in discussions about what plants need to grow and show interest in the white flowers that are changing colour because of the red food colouring they are placed in. The colourful displays and interest tables reinforce children's learning about growing things and staff extend their understanding by showing what happens when plants are starved of food and light.

Children speak with confidence as they share their news during circle time and take turns during conversations. They listen carefully to stories both read by staff and on the tape recorder which they use independently. Children look at books for enjoyment in the cosy book corner and start to understand that text carries meaning as they observe the attractively displayed labels around the rooms. Children recognise their own name as they find their name label when they have their snack. The mark-making area fully supports children to develop their communication and literacy skills. They happily draw pictures using a range of materials and hold writing materials correctly to make marks, with older children writing the letters in their name correctly. Children are making generally good progress in mathematics, however, staff's lack of confidence in this

area means that mathematics is not always sufficiently planned for and problem solving is not always included in everyday activities. Children do however count reliably to ten and at times beyond, recognise numbers, sort and match items. For example, children know they are three-years-old, hold up three fingers and find the number three on a poster. They weigh out ingredients as they make play dough each week and gain an understanding of volume and capacity as they fill containers during water play. Children express themselves creatively during many activities. They use their imagination well as they act out real life situations using small world resources such as driving the cranes, diggers and dumper trucks around the tray filled with gravel. They enthusiastically roll, mould and cut the play dough as they use stencils to make teddy bears and a pony and often make models using recycled materials.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is fostered. Children share warm caring relationships with consistent staff who know them well and meet their individual needs very well. They enjoy activities and resources which promote a positive view of themselves and people of other abilities, races, religion and cultures such as small world toys, books and cooking utensils from around the world. Children celebrate various festivals from around the world including Chinese New Year and taste foods from other countries. This increases their awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. Children become highly independent in the supportive and enabling environment where they understand what is expected of them and feel secure with the regular daily routines. Effective measures are in place to help children learn to share, take turns and play cooperatively. Children look forward to receiving a sticker for behaving well and learn from the positive role model provided by staff.

Children benefit from the effective partnership between parents and staff who have friendly relationships and work closely together. Some information is obtained from parents when children start the playgroup and is shared regularly thereafter. For example, staff share their observations about changes in children's behaviour and are able to support them effectively because they understand the reason for the change. This ensures children receive appropriate and consistent care. Although there are no children currently attending the playgroup who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, staff demonstrated clearly that they could incorporate any additional care needs into the daily routine. They have regular contact with the local authority Special Educational Needs Coordinator who is available to support staff to ensure all children achieve their potential.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. All parents are given a playgroup prospectus that includes information about the Foundation Stage when their children start attending. This information is supplemented with monthly newsletters that includes topics being covered, how they relate to the areas of learning and what children are expected to learn. Overall this helps parents to support their children's learning at home. Although parents are able to view their children's record's of achievement at any time and staff are always happy to talk to them about children's progress, there are no formal arrangements in place for staff to discuss children's progress with their parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the effective organisation and imaginative use of space and resources that allows them to make choices and initiate their own play. The appropriately qualified and experienced staff team are deployed effectively to ensure appropriate care is provided. Children are extremely well supported during activities, with staff allowing them time and space to initiate their play and develop their ideas.

Overall clear records, policies and procedures that underpin the day-to-day practice and support children's welfare are well maintained and shared with parents appropriately. Accident records however, do not always include sufficient detail. Policies and procedures are implemented consistently by staff, who work extremely well as a team, are motivated, and clear about their roles and responsibilities. As a result children are secure, confident and well cared for. Staff have undergone vetting procedures that ensure they are suitable to have regular and unsupervised contact with young children.

The leadership and management is good. The welfare, care and learning of all children is successful because the playgroup has strong leadership with clear aims of providing high quality care and nursery education. The management committee provides effective daily support and good attention is given to staff training and development. The use of evaluation is effective in identifying where the quality of teaching has been successful in promoting children's learning and areas to be developed. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care inspection recommended that the playgroup develop an action plan detailing how at least half of all childcare staff will obtain a level 2 qualification in childcare, ensure that parents are aware of the contents of the policies and procedures and how they help the playgroup and parents work in partnership to meet the needs of the children and request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. All recommendations have been addressed satisfactorily. Children's welfare, care and safety are now promoted more effectively. Half the staff now hold a relevant childcare qualification and two staff are currently working towards a qualification. Written consent to seek emergency medical advice and/or treatment advice is obtained for all children and condensed policies and procedures are shared with parents in the playgroup prospectus. More comprehensive policies and procedures are readily accessible to parents at all times in the operational plan which is held in the playgroup.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that the playgroup extend the use of assessments of children's progress and evaluation of activities to inform planning and teaching and develop children's knowledge and use of everyday technology, information and communication technology, and programmable toys to support their learning. Written plans now include information obtained from children's progress records and the evaluation of activities. Children have regular access to a computer where they become confident in the use of information communication technology. They also regularly use tape recorders independently. This enhances the quality of teaching and promotes individual children's learning more effectively.

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):

- ensure all accident records include details of first aid administered
- develop risk assessments of the premises to include an action plan with timescales, that identifies action to be taken to minimise identified risks.

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 the opportunities for children to learn about mathematics and simple problem solving as part of everyday practical activities
- develop the systems for obtaining information about children when they start the playgroup and to share information about children's progress with parents more formally

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