

Ingrave Village Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY245395
Inspection date	06 February 2008
Inspector	Lynn Amelia Hartigan
Setting Address	St Nicholas Church Hall, Ingrave, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 3RB
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Stephanie Anne Collins
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?

Ingrave Village Playgroup is privately owned and managed by a manager. It opened in 2002 and operates from St. Nicholas Church hall. The playgroup is open five days a week during term time. Morning sessions are from 09.20 until 12.15. Afternoon sessions are offered on a Friday from 13.00 until 15.30. Lunch club is offered Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

There are currently 38 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 32 receive funding for early education. The setting supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup currently employs 10 members of staff. Of these, 7 hold appropriate early years qualifications and 3 are working towards an early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority. Ingrave village playgroup were awarded the 'Investors in People' award in 2006.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted because staff follow sound and consistent procedures. Children stay healthy and are learning about their own personal hygiene as they are encouraged to independently use the bathroom. Staff assist as required. Steps, liquid soap and paper towels are offered to assist hand washing and some posters and photographs are displayed to prompt children to wash their hands. Children's accidents are minimised as staff carry out daily risk assessments of the premises indoors and outdoors and the equipment and toys. Almost all the staff hold a current first aid certificate therefore children are protected and appropriately cared for if they have an accident. A first aid box is well maintained and accident and medication forms are in place. Information is recorded regarding children's medical needs with clear instructions from the parents ensures they are cared for appropriately. Children learn about themselves and how to keep healthy through the staff planning of topics such as 'healthy eating' and 'all about me'. Children confidently discuss good foods to eat and proudly show the inspector their photographs of their trip to the local farm.

Children have their dietary needs met and increase their understanding of healthy living because they are appropriately nourished and have plenty of opportunities to learn about healthy eating through their project work. The playgroup offer healthy snacks and provide children with regular drinks, as water is readily available.

Children help prepare the snack in the kitchen and are able to choose the snack of the day from a large basket of fruit, vegetables and savoury options. Snack monitors are chosen daily and every child gets a turn of preparing snack which they do with great enjoyment and enthusiasm. Snacks provided have taken into account children's individual dietary and religious requirements as the staff have good communication with parents and these details are recorded within their personal records. Children enjoy cheese cubes and crackers and dried apricots which have been carefully prepared by their friends. They have great fun trying stir fry vegetables to celebrate Chinese new year. Children skilfully chop the vegetables themselves. Eating with chopsticks introduces a new and fun way of eating and some children persevere for a great length of time, no child is rushed to complete their snack as it is considered an important part of their learning. The snack monitors also take responsibility for washing up after snack.

Children move around indoors very carefully. They play in one large hall and are able to move around within the room and visit the bathroom, negotiating space well. They free flow from indoors and outdoors throughout the year, however during the colder months the main door is closed to maintain the temperature in the hall. Vigilant staff ensure that children's safety is maintained at all times. Children's physical health is supported with regard to large motor development as many opportunities are provided for children to develop their large physical skills for example, large climbing frames within the main play area. Stepping stones and balancing bars trikes and scooters are regularly available. Children enjoy fresh air and exercise daily and have fun playing in the garden throughout the year, regardless of the weather. Children handle tools such as scissors, trowels and chopsticks and malleable materials effectively, safely and with control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm welcoming environment that is safe and well maintained. The premises are welcoming to both children and their parents. There are several notice boards within the entrance hall with useful information for parents and the room is bright and child-friendly. Staff display some of the children's art work and photographs creating a welcoming environment. The children play in one large playroom and children are able to free flow in and out of the room into the outdoor play area for most of the session. There are some cosy and defined areas such as a book corner, although this area is not greatly used by the children.

Children are kept safe as the staff ensure all visitors have identification and use a visitors book. A secure front door is locked once parents have left and is monitored by vigilant staff on departures ensures the premises remain secure. Children self-register and are recorded in by staff as they immediately have registration. Children use a balanced range of safe and suitable equipment. Resources are of a good quality and there is a broad range available to the children to assist their play and learning.

The staff are committed in providing safe and secure play space for children, this is achieved by vigilant management of children. All staff are aware of their roles and where they should be deployed. Free flow play indoors and outdoors is managed discreetly and well. Children are familiar with fire drills as these are practised regularly. Children are safeguarded from harm because the staff are aware of their responsibilities towards child protection. A written policy is in place that underpins their practice. This includes a lost child policy and a procedure for uncollected children. The children's safety is given priority and the playgroup have written procedures for recruitment and induction of staff and students.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children appear happy and confident. They ask questions and respond to new challenges by questioning and some use their own initiative. Children's individual needs are met although some occasionally need more challenge. Children are developing a good range of knowledge and skills because the setting plan and provide activities and play experiences that help children achieve in all these areas. Well-organised and attractively displayed activities are prepared ready for the children's arrival. Children happily settle very quickly to their chosen activity. They are able to free flow indoors and out and staff movement is dictated by the children's choice of where to play. However, children's choice is compromised as they are unable self-select resources as these are not easily accessible. Toys, however are usually provided on request to assist and extend their play.

Children visit the playgroup's allotment, they grow their own produce that is used for snacks and cooking and also have the opportunity to learn about growing and caring for plants. Children start the day with a short registration where the day, month and weather is discussed. They talk about the activities available to them. However, activities are cleared away reasonably quickly after the session begins to allow for snack. Snack time is excellent and offers children valuable opportunities for learning in all areas. However, the organisation of the session at this time often means that some children are not engaged in any meaningful activity and staff attempts at group story time are not always successful due to the noise level and distraction in the hall.

Children learn all about themselves and their homes. They discuss how they look and their individuality. They discuss their homes and make houses from junk modelling. They enjoy walks in the local environment looking at houses comparing size, shape and colour. They enjoy making houses outdoors using large wooden blocks, trowels and pretend cement. They have fun wearing the hard hats and tabards and use their initiative when they run out of bricks. Planning for the younger children is implemented well and they enjoy investigating the large interest baskets that are available and very popular. Contents such as small inflatable objects, shaving brushes, wooden kitchen utensils and different materials provide lots of interest and enjoyment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning for funded children has improved greatly and staff are able to discuss the children's stage of development. Short term plans have basic evaluation and loosely link to assessment. Children's achievements are monitored through adult-focused activities and written observations related to areas of learning. All aspects of each area of learning is planned for and are covered regularly. Key workers monitor any gaps and meet very regularly to plan for the next stage of the child's learning.

Children's creativity is encouraged and supported well as staff offer a wide range of experiences such as regular use of dough, music, painting and dressing up. Children are able to count competently to 10 and some beyond, they recognise numerals and are beginning to compare. Children find the appropriate number for registration and the date of the day. Some children are able to complete simple addition and subtraction. They learn about weight and measure through using the scales in cooking activities and weighing objects. They learn about sinking and floating when using fruits and vegetables within the water tray.

Children are beginning to write their names and mark make, they understand that text has meaning. They enjoy acting out their favourite story such as 'Going on a Bear Hunt' and also have fun re-writing the ending and predicting what may happen next. Children welcome visitors to the playgroup such as a mechanic, policeman and librarian and learn how people help them within the community. Children can independently use the computer but staff are on hand to assist as required. Children patiently wait for their turn and help each other. They enjoy investigating outdoors with magnifying glasses, looking for bugs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing good relationships with adults and other children in a setting. Staff work closely with parents and carers to meet children's individual needs and ensure they are fully included in the life of the playgroup. Children develop a sense of belonging, they work well with others and make choices and decisions for example, at snack time, this contributes to children developing self-esteem and respect for others. The staff ensure that they know all children well and that they are provided with equality of opportunity. Children appear happy and confident. Children are able to access resources that are in place such as small world figures, books and some posters. These reflect a diverse community and help children learn and understand about individuality, however, these are limited and could be developed further. Children learn about some traditional days such as Mothers day and festivals such as Chinese new year, and Christmas as these are included within the curriculum planning. Children enjoy tasting stir fry and eating with chopsticks. They have fun playing with noodles in a large tray and admire the Chinese dragon in celebration of Chinese New Year.

Children's needs are supported as the staff follow their written policy regarding learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The staff ensure that they adapt activities to enable all children to participate and that all appropriate resources are in place to fully support any child. Children understand responsible behaviour and learn about boundaries as staff are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour. Staff deal with behaviour consistently that is proportionate to the child's level of understanding and maturity. The staff create an environment that encourages children to behave well. Children develop self-esteem and respect for others by learning social skills for example, helping each other at snack time, listening to their friends news or singing songs in group time. Staff encourage children to participate and discuss what they have been doing during the morning or at home during circle time.

Children's needs are being met well as the playgroup works closely with parents and carers to enable all children to achieve well. Parents are given some clear information in a variety of formats which includes newsletters, information sheets, information board and verbally. Children receive good care and are supported well as the staff ensure the parents are informed regarding their day at playgroup. The staff are friendly and approachable and discussions with parents suggest they are very pleased with the playgroup.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children settle well as an effective settling in process is in place. Children are visited by staff at home prior to admission and are also offered cameras to take photos at home of the things that interest them. Staff then build on their likes and interests within the planning. Parents are provided with some good information about all aspects of their children's learning. They regularly receive activity sheets and are provided with newsletters. The playgroup's themes and projects are detailed and ideas and suggestions of how parents can support their children at home are detailed.

Parents are aware that development records are kept on their children and staff encourage them to contribute to them. A daily book details their child's day and photographs are included regularly to show parents what their children have been doing. Children help print their photographs from the computer and help staff stick them into their development records. Staff also discuss the children on an informal basis daily and parental questionnaires are regularly used to ascertain the parents opinions. Open days for parents and children are currently being organised to introduce parents to the playgroup and understand the importance of their children's play and activities.

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children are settled, content and comfortable with each other. Children learn about other countries and people's beliefs through festivals and some positive images provided in resources and displays that challenge the children's thinking. Children clearly know the difference from what is right and wrong and their behaviour is good as the staff are good role models and clearly value all children and their individuality.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a manager and a staff team who offer stability and consistency as most have worked at the setting for many years. However, they are not complacent and are committed in providing quality care and endeavour to keep up to date with current practice through training. The manager supports and encourages her staff in their own development as a result children are cared for by qualified and dedicated staff. Procedures are in place with regard to recruitment, vetting and induction for staff, students or volunteers.

Attention is given to the deployment of staff at all sessions and it is evident that staff are fully aware of what is expected from them, they clearly support each other which contributes to the smooth running of the sessions. All staff demonstrate a good standard of professionalism at all times, are friendly and approachable.

Attendance records are well maintained and appropriate documents as required are all in place. The operational plan has now been sectioned into the outcomes for children.

Leadership and management is good. The manager is hands on and is very much part of the team, with no distinction as most of the staff are experienced and competent. Review of the service provided is continuous and the manager welcomes new ideas and suggestion if it will have a positive impact on the children. The manager and her staff endeavour to keep up to date with current thinking and are therefore able to provide the children with a good standard of care. A comprehensive training programme for staff and appraisal system in place ensures the staff are fully supported in their own development. The playgroup were awarded with the 'Investors in People' award in 2006.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure the fire evacuation procedures were reviewed. Fire evacuation is now practiced every half term and recorded. The provider also agreed to ensure the staff were updated on changes to legislation that affects the provision, in particular child protection. Policies are now reviewed and updated regularly and staff frequently attend training. The provider was asked to ensure the planning and assessment records were developed so that they demonstrated how all areas of the curriculum were planned for. Development of the planning system is continuous, staff ensure it demonstrates all areas of learning and supports children's individual needs.

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 complaint 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 that toys, resources and equipment are easily accessible to the children, enabling them to self-select
- develop play materials and resources that reflect diversity and provide children with positive images of a diverse community.

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):

- review the structure of the sessions to ensure they are effective in supporting children's learning and independence at all times.

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