

Mawdesley Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	309381
Inspection date	12 February 2008
Inspector	Denise Sixsmith
Setting Address	Mawdesley Village Hall, Hurst Green, Mawdesley, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L40 2QT
Telephone number	01704 822 721
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Registered person	Mawdesley 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?

Mawdesley Village Playgroup has been established for over 34 years. It operates from a room within the village hall building in the village of Mawdesley. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday, except Wednesday, from 09.00 to 12.00 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 18 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. The group currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

The nursery employs three members of staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are very aware of the importance of looking after their bodies. They follow good personal hygiene routines, such as fetching tissues to wipe their nose and washing hands before snack. However, some children forget to wash their hands after independently attending the toilet. Children learn about keeping warm and dry when playing out in the cold and windy weather because staff talk about putting on coats and hats ready for outdoor play. Children stay healthy because staff implement effective procedures to minimise the risk of infection, for example, they clean tables using antibacterial spray. There is a range of measures to support children's good health. Allergies or dietary issues are discussed with parents before children commence at the group. Children use separate paper towels when hand drying to reduce the risk of cross-contamination and written parental permission has been obtained to seek emergency treatment. Children benefit from the staff's training and good understanding of first aid including the correct procedures to follow should accidents occur.

Children's physical development is promoted appropriately. Children take turns to ride the bikes and wheeled toys on the paved area and play on the grass in dry weather. They have good opportunity to explore and enjoy digging and planting in the large soil-filled planters outside.

Children widen their appreciation of healthy snack options through the nutritious food they enjoy whilst in the setting. Staff assist children to increase their knowledge of healthy eating through topics and displays of good quality reference books. They learn about fresh oranges and make their own juice using the orange squeezer. Children readily help themselves to water during the sessions from a jug and dispose of the cups in the bin. This helps to ensure they remain hydrated. Children enjoy the social element of snack times, with good opportunities being provided for children to engage in conversations with each other and staff. Children gain independence as they chose their snack from serving plates in the centre of the table. They eagerly and readily wipe down their place mats after snack and volunteer to help to wash up the plates and mugs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are clean, bright, well maintained and of an appropriate temperature. Examples of children's posters and artwork create welcoming displays for parents and children. Play areas are made inviting and welcoming because resources are stored at low level for children to access easily. The low level posters, number line, children's self-registration boards and displays of children's work contribute to the welcoming environment. Children benefit from the staff's good understanding of safety issues regarding the purchase and ongoing maintenance of equipment. As a result, they play with age-appropriate toys that are safe and suitable.

Staff carry out thorough risk assessments prior to children's arrival and reduce hazards effectively. Children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised as staff monitor the handover times at the end of the sessions carefully. Children know the procedure for emergency evacuation and practise this regularly with staff. They take responsibility for tidying up during changes in the session and develop an understanding of the boundaries within the setting to keep them safe. This means they are learning to take responsibility and develop an awareness of safety

issues, for example, they recognise the potential dangers of running around inside or throwing toys.

Staff are competent in their knowledge of safeguarding children in their care. Written procedures are in place outlining arrangements for child protection concerns and staff have a sound knowledge of the steps to follow and who to contact. Recent training ensures that the staff have up to date knowledge. Children's safety is assured as they arrive and leave the group because staff are vigilant of their security. Accurate records are maintained of the children, staff and visitors to the group because they signed in and out of the building. This maintains children's safety and security.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive confidently and quickly settle into activities of their choosing. They display high levels of confidence, responding well to the continual praise from staff, and develop very good self-care skills. Younger children benefit because they play alongside their peers. Children are skilful communicators contributing their own ideas to group discussions. They enjoy making connections and representing their own ideas through creative activities, for example, using scissors, glue, glitter paper, compact disks and coloured cellophane to make valentine cards of their own design. Staff make observations of children's progress and use this to help plan the next stage in their individual development. They are making appropriate use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, to help plan and assess younger children. Interaction between children and staff is very good. Staff play with children, adapting their teaching and questioning techniques, to ensure they pitch experiences and discussions at the appropriate level. Children benefit because staff know them very well and build on their individual interests to help support their learning.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The system for planning is secure and ensures all aspects of the curriculum are sufficiently included. All children make good progress in their individual learning, because staff have a very good knowledge of what children can do. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They plan a variety of practical, age-appropriate activities to cover all areas of the curriculum and to support children's progress towards the early learning goals. They regularly undertake written, dated observations and assessments of the children in addition to completing the local authority profile scheme. Children's ongoing progress and achievements are observed and monitored and staff are effective in the way in which they use this information to help inform their planning.

Children have good opportunities to practise their emergent writing skills through meaningful activities, such as writing their names and messages in their valentine cards as well as making notes and appointments in the vet role play area. Children have a good range of vocabulary. They use language very confidently, such as when they enthusiastically talking about the big eyes and little eyes of the 'mummy' snowman they are making with the squashy play dough. Through practical activities including self-registration, named snack mats and resource books that support the activities, children learn to recognise familiar words in print. Children have good chances to count, such as when singing number songs. They confidently use the knitted frogs to support the speckled frog song and successfully work out how many are left on the log. Children confidently use the computer to reinforce their hand and eye coordination as well as develop their colour, shape and pattern skills.

Activities are challenging and interesting without being adult-led because they are well resourced; for example, role play in the vets clinic provides good opportunities for children to feed and care for the animals as well as make appointments and access informative leaflets, posters and books. This enables children to gain the maximum enjoyment and learning from the activity and encourages them to instigate and extend their own play. Children are very kind to each other and share readily, for example, they help each other to wrap a compact disk in coloured cellophane to fix to a card and then make a mobile when this does not work to their satisfaction. Children take turns on the computer and to assist in the singing, this is positively endorsed through praise by staff. Consequently, staff and children work in a very pleasant, calm and productive environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a good sense of belonging in this group and take on responsibility; for example, they initiate their activities making their own choices and learn to tidy things away when they have finished with them. All children play very well together cooperating to complete a pattern on the computer and build a large construction with brackets, nuts and bolts. Children learn to value themselves and one another, recognising their similarities and differences. They are very aware of one another's needs and celebrate their own and other's achievements. Staff and children communicate using language and gestures, ensuring all are fully included and valued. Secure systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and additional needs, ensuring every child makes good individual progress. Children benefit from the staff knowing them well, appreciating their differing needs and understanding their home circumstances. They are becoming increasingly aware of diversity, which is promoted through topics and resources. Staff plan activities around special events and cultural festivals, increasing children's understanding of a variety of customs, beliefs and traditions. Consequently, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave very well. Their behaviour is supported by staff who act as good role models, have patience, talk to the children kindly and repeatedly offer praise and encouragement. This enables children to start to gain an appreciation of right and wrong whilst in the group. Staff place an emphasis on courteous exchanges and children are actively encouraged to use please and thank you. Children smile broadly when praised by staff who take particular care to praise newly acquired skills, for example, when a child recognises their name on their snack table mat for the first time. Good work or kind actions are celebrated and rewarded in the group through the presenting of the special drinking mugs at snack time.

Parents are encouraged to share information about their children when they join the group, and continue to share information through regular informal talks with staff. Parents and carers receive an information booklet about the playgroup and can access their child's individual achievements folder at any time. They are invited to share information about home events through the playgroup diary. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Ongoing information is provided about their children's development and achievements through verbal exchanges, photographs and written information. Less emphasis is given to enabling parents to support their child's learning at home, for example, through suggested home link activities. All parents spoken to are happy with the care that the group provides for their children with some deciding to travel in from other areas.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's safety is protected well through the group's policies and procedures. Staff ensure that children receive a balance of activities in a well organised environment where appropriate good quality toys and equipment are in place.

Robust recruitment and selection procedures ensure that appropriate staff are employed and children are protected from potential harm. Arrangements for induction and appraisal system are in place and implemented in practice. Clear policies and procedures meet requirements although not all are readily available when being updated. Attendance registers, the visitors record and other required records are maintained in good order to ensure that staff are well supported and children protected appropriately.

The leadership and management is good. The group greatly benefits from the drive, commitment and enthusiasm of the manager and staff who work closely together and receive good support from the committee. The staff meet on a regular basis to plan and evaluate the educational provision. They work very well as a team and are keen to take up the training opportunities available, to continue their self-development and enhance the play and learning for all children.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were a number of recommendations set at the last inspection. All of the recommendations have been addressed. The staff induction system is now more specific, staff times of departure are recorded on the register, the child protection statement includes action to be undertaken in the event of an allegation being made against a staff member. The following safety issues have been addressed to ensure that the outdoor play area is secure from the general public during the children's outdoor play time, the tiles in the toilet no longer pose a hazard and advice has been sought from the Environmental Health Officer with regards to the storage of packed lunches. Consequently, the safety and welfare of the children has been improved.

Key issues raised for the nursery education have been addressed in the action plan and implemented ensuring that the planning is more systematic and linked to the stepping stones. Children have the opportunity to write for a variety of purposes in particular in the role play areas and have regular exposure to numerals around the room and through practical activity. Staff ensure that children have more access to a range of resources to build and construct. The physical outdoor play is still in the planning stage and consequently has been raised again as a recommendation. Overall, staff have improved the learning and development environment and experiences for the children.

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):

- develop strategies to assist children to remember to wash their hands after independently visiting the toilet
- develop systems to ensure that all current policies are readily available.

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 outdoor area to provide children with a variety of physical activity (also applies to care)
- further develop and implement a variety of ways to enable parents to contribute to and be involved in their child's learning should they wish to do so.

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