

Landywood Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218179
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Inspector	Susan Rogers
Setting Address	Community Centre, Landywood Lane, Great Wyrley, Walsall, West Midlands, WS6 6JX
Telephone number	01922 414768 or 01922 415850 (Manager)
E-mail	
Registered person	Landywood 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?

Landywood Playgroup is run by Landywood Playgroup Committee. It opened in 1973. The group operates from a community centre in Great Wyrley, Walsall. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:15 to 11:45 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 32 children aged two to four years on roll. Of these, six receive funding for nursery education. Children attending live in and around the local area.

The playgroup employs six staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting is supported by the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a variety of healthy snacks and cooking activities which promotes their well-being. For example, children enjoy snacks of breadsticks, sliced fruit and raisins. Children always have sufficient drinks served during snack times and there is a jug of water with cups that children can access at any time. Cooking activities that include making fish cakes and cakes promote children's understanding of healthy eating and the concept of where food comes from. Topics that include positive oral hygiene and going to the dentist are used to promote children's understanding of good health.

The meticulous hygiene routines promote children's well-being, for example, all tables are cleaned with antibacterial solution prior to snack time and children regularly wash their hands after using the toilet, before snacks and cooking activities. Explanations reinforce children's understanding of the purpose of washing their hands. For example, children understand that the germs on your hands can make you sick.

Children have several opportunities to become involved in more exerting physical activities as the outdoor area is frequently used where they use wheeled toys and enjoy the wider potential of play using the outdoor space. Children are involved in a wealth of activities that develop their smaller muscle movements which includes, putting together jigsaws, using cutters to cut play dough, scissors to cut paper and glue using spatulas and paint brushes. A variety of cooking activities encourage children's smaller muscle skills. For example, children break eggs into a bowl when they are cooking cakes.

Children are well protected if there are concerns in respect of their health as all of the staff have a paediatric first aid qualification and would know how to respond if that was an accident or they were concerns over children's health. The documentation provides substantial protection for children's well-being, for example, all accidents are recorded and there is a sick child policy that encourages parents to care for their child at home if they are ill.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's learning is stimulated as the outdoor space is exceptionally well used with a variety of activity toys and wheeled toys which promotes their physical health. Children regularly access the outdoor environment which provides wider play opportunities which, consequently, promote their learning. A wide range of resources that include wheeled toys, jigsaw creative play equipment and craft resources progresses children's learning. Additional resources are borrowed from the local toy library which provides children with further learning opportunities. Children are well protected if there are concerns in respect of their care as staff have attended advanced child protection training and ensure parents are aware of their obligations. The high levels of dedication and commitment towards providing a safe and caring environment protects children's welfare.

The mostly effective risk assessments protect children's well-being. For example, staff complete a visual check of the internal and external areas and remove any items of concern. However, the exterior surface outside one of the fire exit doors has been recently resurfaced which prevents the fire door opening and, therefore, has the potential to compromise children's

safety. Children play safely as staff are skilled at providing advice and ensuring children respond safely. Their independence is actively encouraged, for example, children enjoyed a cooking activity where they watched their cakes cooking in the microwave. However, staff carefully monitor children's safety at all times mopping up any spills and ensuring equipment is safe which protects children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's language development is encouraged through staff frequently asking open-ended questions and encouraging children to become involved in active conversation. For example, a group of children discuss the story of the three little pigs where staff ask questions to ascertain children's existing knowledge and develop the activity to accommodate children's individual learning needs. Staff are highly skilled in promoting conversation ensuring they closely monitor children's progress which promotes their learning. A range of interesting outdoor activities and external visitors further stimulate children's learning. For example, staff arrange for some emergency services to visit the setting and visits to local farms and local venues provide stimulating and interesting activities that inform and promote children's curiosity.

A relaxed and child-friendly environment helps children make confident choices as they engage in a range of meaningful play activities. Warm and caring relationships are nurtured by staff and foster children's trust and sense of well-being. These relationships result in appropriate adult and child interactions which promotes children's communication skills. For example, children are very secure in the setting as they frequently go to staff for hugs and cuddles. Sensitivity towards children's individual needs ensures that they settle easily.

Children make steady progress as staff have a sound understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use this well to support their development. A range of sensory experiences that include using water, sand and paint encourages their confidence and promotes children's development. For example, children use cutters to cut out shapes from dough and pour water into different containers during water play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff adapt their conversations and teaching methods to match children's individual needs. The assessments are detailed and include evaluative information in respect of children's progress. Consequently, the detailed assessments provide a sound structure when planning for the children's future development and provide a focus for their individual needs. Children's assessments are well documented and include photographic evidence and examples of their work. Children's starting points when they enter the setting are given high consideration when planning for their progress. Planning is detailed and follows the Foundation Stage.

Effective training opportunities ensure that staff are knowledgeable in respect of the Foundation Stage which allows them to skilfully introduce several areas of learning into each activity. Spontaneous teaching opportunities are frequently used during outdoor play such as observing a helicopter or a large bird in the sky. Staff are sufficiently skilled in adapting their levels of care and teaching to correspond with abilities of the children accommodating their various ages and providing sufficient challenge for all of the children. Detailed knowledge in respect of children's individual needs ensure that they benefit from optimum learning opportunities as staff skilfully include children's play preferences during teaching opportunities.

Children's are beginning to use number for a purpose. They count how old they are and count the number of children in a group. They are recognising numerals and are beginning to recognise groups of numbers, for example, a group of three objects. They are beginning to understand positional language during water play describing objects that float and which is the heaviest. They communicate well using a broad vocabulary and use their language skills to describe what they are doing through imagined play scenarios. They enjoy accessing books for pleasure in the comfortable reading corner and are learning about the rewards of storytelling through supported reading opportunities. There are interesting opportunities for children to enjoy story time in a larger group as staff use three-dimensional props to illustrate a story and to give greater understanding. They are recognising the purpose of text and are beginning to recognise their own names by posting their name tags through the post box each day.

Children have a range of opportunities to express themselves through imagined play scenarios and through using a range of materials that include dough, construction equipment, glue and paint. They are able to match their physical movements to the words of the song and follow the rhythm of a song through dancing spontaneously. They are learning about the world around them and are able to compare their lives at home with others through one-to-one observations with staff and during circle time. Although children have access to some technology during creative play opportunities their access to the computer is limited.

Children are rapidly gaining independence. They serve each other at snack time and pour themselves a drink from a jug. Most of the children can dress themselves with a coat and a scarf before outdoor play and are confident in providing for their own personal care. They are forming effective relationships with each other and are considerate and kind when sharing play activities. They are mindful of others when moving around the area and are skilled at allowing sufficient space for each other when using wheeled toys or when sitting on the floor. They skilfully balance using beams and crawl through tunnels. They use a variety of equipment that include paint brushes to spread glue, watering cans to fill containers with water, jigsaws and cutters to cut dough. They are skilled at using scissors to cut a variety of shapes with greater challenge being provided for the more able children as they cut more complex shapes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good care as staff have extensive experience of caring for children with a variety of needs and are able to contribute towards individual education plans. A good understanding of relevant legislation and a knowledge of effective liaison with outside agencies promotes children's well-being. Children's continuity of care is protected as staff communicate well with parents in respect of their care needs. Children settle well as their parents are encouraged to stay during the sessions which promotes their confidence.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They behave extremely well and are kind and considerate towards each other. Staff adopt a positive approach when helping children appreciate values and positive behaviour. They describe appropriate behaviour, consequently, children respond well, take turns, share and become involved in harmonious play. They are frequently praised which contributes towards their positive self-esteem. Children behave well and are actively encouraged to contribute towards the organisation of the setting by clearing away toys and equipment once the session has ended. They are helpful and cooperative during routines and activities which promotes their self-esteem.

Children are learning about other cultures and how to be sensitive and in respect of the needs of others. For example, the needs of others are discussed using props and teaching materials during circle time which helps children gain understanding and awareness. A variety of equipment and materials that support children's understanding of the wider world promotes their understanding. Straightforward explanations further extend children's understanding and empathy towards the needs of others.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff actively seek parents' opinions in respect of their child's achievements before they commence attending the setting which assists staff in meeting children's needs. Parents' opinions are much valued as staff consider that they have the most knowledge in respect of their child. Consequently, staff have access to useful information in respect of each child's needs. Information in respect of the Foundation Stage is readily accessible to parents through photographs, planning and a well presented prospectus which is available to each parent. Parents are informed of their child's progress through regular reviews and assessments. Although parents are informed in advance of the proposed activities through newsletters there is insufficient information available on a regular basis that relates to children's daily activities. Parents are actively encouraged to continue with their child's education in the home setting by bringing items into the setting for forthcoming activities, through newsletters and through observations of their child's activities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well protected as they are always cared for by a vetted member of staff. The efficient recruitment procedures ensure that staff have the appropriate skills and attitude to protect children's welfare. The well-established staff group ensures that may have a wealth of experience and expertise and, therefore, promote children's well-being. Children's protection is further protected as there is always a generous staffing ratio which, therefore, promotes children. The documentation and children's personal information is well presented and stored securely protecting children's well-being. Parents have access to their child's individual records which are regularly updated promoting children's welfare.

Children's learning is promoted as staff access a wide variety of training opportunities that help them develop their existing skills so that they are more efficient at meeting children's needs. The manager works closely with outside agencies to promote additional funding, access advice and developed a further range of resources. Both the indoor and outdoor environment is well organised which promotes children's independence and self-esteem.

Leadership and management is good. A well presented prospectus that is available to parents details the aims and intentions of the group and information that relates to the Foundation Stage. Sound and confident teaching is provided through the well-established staff team. Regular appraisals and modular training opportunities help to promote the professional qualifications and a positive delivery of service. Regular staff and committee meetings are well utilised to help staff learn from each other and consolidate planning and evaluation. The manager provides extensive support for her staff group but is also actively involved in the delivery of Foundation Stage teaching.

Effective delegation encourages staff's responsibilities to make the most of their skills and commitment. Consequently, staff are knowledgeable and confident in their abilities. Staff are well supported in their role as their performance is regularly appraised and their strengths and training opportunities are carefully monitored. The professional development of staff is well

managed so that teaching and learning is improved through the attendance of modular training opportunities and the sharing of information through staff meetings and shared professional experiences. The setting regularly completes a self-evaluation analysis in conjunction with committee members and staff and is eager to learn from any criticism or suggestions. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to record children's departure times from the group. Children now have suitable protection as the attendance register records their date of attendance and times of arrival and departure.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection they 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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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 all fire escape exits are accessible.

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):

- make more opportunities available for children to use technology as part of their everyday routines
- develop ways of communicating regularly with parents in respect of their child's activities.

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