

West Looe Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	102890
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Inspector	Brenda Joan Flewitt
Setting Address	The Old School Canteen, Downs Road, Looe, Cornwall, PL13 2AR
Telephone number	01503 265623
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Registered person	West Looe 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?

West Looe Playgroup opened in 1971. It is located in the old school canteen in West Looe, Cornwall. The accommodation consists of two rooms, with toilet and kitchen facilities. There are two fully enclosed areas available for outside play. The playgroup is open from 09.00 to 11.30, Monday to Friday and on Wednesday afternoons from 12.30 to 15.00, during school term times. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 48 children on roll. Of these, 27 receive funding for early education. There are seven members of staff employed to work with the children. Of these, most hold relevant early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted. They are cared for in a clean environment where they develop independence in good practice for their own personal hygiene. The toilet and hand washing facilities are easily accessible and they know that they must wash hands before handling food, through regular routine. Children are protected from the spread of infection through staff procedures which includes a daily cleaning rota and wearing a protective apron when preparing food. Staff have completed training in food hygiene and there is a clear sickness policy which ensures that parents are aware that children must not attend if they have an infectious illness. Children's medication and accidents are well managed. Almost every member of staff holds a current first aid certificate, the first aid box is well-stocked and easily accessible, and the relevant records are completed accurately and signed by parents.

Children enjoy a healthy lifestyle. They have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise. The inside and outside areas are utilised everyday to provide various activities where children develop large and small muscle skills. For example, when playing outside children skilfully pedal tricycles avoiding each other and obstacles, they enjoy 'painting' or 'writing' on the paving stones with water and paintbrushes, and kick a ball backwards and forwards. Parachute games are a favourite with most children, there is much laughter as they pretend it is the sea, making 'rough' or 'calm' conditions as they bend and stretch to make the waves. They love to run underneath, jumping with delight. Children learn to make healthy choices in what they eat through the 'café' style snack system. Children choose when to have their snack, indicating they have done so by finding their name labels. They decide what plate and cup to use and develop skills as they pour their own milk or water. They choose from a good selection of raw vegetables or fruit which is arranged attractively on a centre plate. The social occasion as children sit together, with a member of staff, encourages language and confidence in talking about preferences and their home lives.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in safe and secure premises where risks and hazards are identified and minimised. Risk assessments, together with thoughtful organisation of the space available, are effective in making sure the environment is safe for children to move around freely as they choose their activities. The good security system ensures that children are protected from uninvited visitors and cannot leave the building unsupervised. Children use play provision and resources that are well organised and kept in good condition.

Children know what is expected if they must leave the building in an emergency as they discuss the routine each day at register time and are involved in regular practises. For example, children know that '999' would be called, the name of their playgroup and the 'safe place' where they would assemble. Fire exits are clearly marked and staff responsibilities are clear. This all helps to promote children's safety in a real situation.

Children are kept safe on outings through staff procedures which include seeking written parental permission, increased adult-to-child ratios and making sure first aid resources and contact numbers are readily available. Children learn about road safety through discussion and the good example set by staff. This is reinforced through visits into the group by local police

officers, where children are involved in role play to compound their understanding of staying safe.

Staff have a good understanding of how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow with concerns. Supervisory staff attend training regularly to keep updated with changes and cascade their knowledge through staff meetings. Existing injuries are recorded as routine. All this helps to protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and secure. They enjoy the time they spend at the playgroup and make good relationships with staff and each other. Children develop confidence in making their needs known, as they can be sure of a friendly response. The staff who care for them are approachable, caring and interested in them as individuals, valuing what they have to say. The environment is welcoming to both children and adults. The colourful displays and photographs are a reminder for children of their achievements and previous activities they have enjoyed.

All children take part in a broad range of activities and experiences which help them learn in all areas of development. They develop independence in practical skills such as managing their own clothing, equipment at snack time, and using hand washing resources. There is an effective key worker system throughout the playgroup. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework effectively to assess and plan the younger children's development. Children use an extensive supply of play provision and resources which are well organised and arranged to encourage children to select for themselves to extend their own play and learning.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good working knowledge of the Foundation stage. They meet weekly to discuss children's achievements and plan for their progress. The assessment system is used effectively to set regular targets for individual children. The staff know children well as individuals and set appropriate challenges, therefore, the children are making good progress in their learning. Staff use a range of teaching methods to help children think, recall, and solve problems. There is a good balance of adult-led and child initiated tasks and the environment is well planned to encourage children to make choices and keep them stimulated and interested.

The role play area is well organised and resourced to encourage various areas of learning. Staff change the resources regularly to reflect the topic. For example, a child concentrates well on making a packet of seeds for the 'Flower Shop'. Supported appropriately by a member of staff, she uses cutting skills to shape the packet thinking about which is 'bigger' or 'smaller', joins the sides with tape and draws 'circles' to represent carrots. She then writes her name forming recognisable letters to identify her work. Other children count flower pots, remember that seeds need sun and water to grow and make a model of a plant to take home.

Children develop a wide knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They learn about changes in nature such as how frogs grow from frogspawn. They are fascinated as they take turns to look at tadpoles through a magnifying glass. Woodland walks offer opportunities for collecting and discussing features of natural objects and their local environment. Children have hands-on experience in using a range of modern technology. A computer is constantly available and children develop competency in using the mouse to move images on the screen,

and solving puzzles. For instance, a four-year-old independently completes a programme, identifying differences in two similar pictures. Children use a digital camera to take photographs and record their voices for the 'sound board', where they link numbers with numerals.

Most children use language well to communicate. They are confident in speaking out in a group about events in their lives and discussing what the weather is like. Children enjoy books and stories, both individually selected or in a group. They listen well and join in as appropriate. Children learn to recognise their written names through daily activities including self-registration and snack time. They have many opportunities for practising skills for writing and some children are confident in forming the letters of their name, linking the sounds with the letters.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are respected as individuals. Staff get to know children well through effective communication with parents and as they support their activities on a daily basis. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator attends ongoing training to ensure she has the skills to support children with any extra needs. These include liaising with parents, staff and connected professionals to help all children to be included.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging to a community. They see many pictures of themselves and their work displayed in the setting, at their level. Children are made to feel special on their birthdays as they receive a card, blow out candles and as their friends sing to them. They take part in various local events and celebrations such as the carnival and St Piren's Day. Being involved in raising money for 'Children in Need' helps start children's awareness of helping people less fortunate than themselves. They learn about the wider world through planned topic work such as Chinese New Year and Diwali, when they taste different foods, hear stories and dance to music.

Children behave very well. They know what is expected through familiar routine, and clear explanations. They learn to take turns and consider others and are keen to help pack away equipment when it is time to tidy up. Children receive constant praise and encouragement from the adults who work with them, which helps build their self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the positive relationships between staff and parents. Parents are supplied with comprehensive information about the setting by way of a prospectus, a wealth of displays within the playgroup building, and through regular newsletters. There are daily opportunities for exchanging information verbally to help meet children's individual needs, because staff make themselves available to talk at the beginning and end of each session.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are well informed about the Foundation Stage and their child's progress. Parents have access to progress records at any time and are invited to consultation appointments each half term to talk with their child's key worker. Parents have various opportunities to be involved in their child's learning. Helping at a playgroup session gives them good insight about their child's time at playgroup. Children like to choose books to take home and share with their parents and family. Parents have an opportunity to have an active voice in their child's care and education by being on the management committee. Although staff seek various information about each child on registration forms, parents are not specifically involved in the assessment of children's starting points for the Foundation Stage, on admission.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by suitably qualified staff who work very well together as a team. They have clear roles and responsibilities, and sessions run smoothly. Therefore, children know what to expect and settle quickly. There are satisfactory staff recruitment procedures which include making sure that applicants are subject to procedures to ensure they are suitable to work with children. However, there is no clear system for obtaining information about any health issues.

The clear staff induction process ensures that new staff are well informed to carry out procedures outlined in policies which promote the safety and welfare of the children. The effective organisation of the premises, resources and structure of the day means that children are active in a safe environment, well supervised and supported and enjoy daily outside activities. All the required documentation and records are in place, stored confidentially and completed accurately. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. There are some good systems in place to help monitor the provision for nursery education. The playgroup has clear aims and objectives. Regular meetings give staff opportunities to share issues, ideas and concerns as well as plan for individual children. Visits from local authority advisors are welcomed and there are positive links with the local school. Children visit the school and meet reception teachers in both settings, this helps them become familiar with people and a new environment, promoting a smooth transition as they start school. Staff appraisals help to identify any areas for development, and training is well supported.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care inspection recommended that the policy on behaviour management includes a bullying statement. The policy has been updated to include a statement on bullying.

The last nursery education inspection recommended: that the effectiveness of the routine was evaluated in terms of maximising opportunities for teaching, listening and learning; that the link between assessment of the children and planning of next steps of learning for them was strengthened; and that more opportunities were provided for all children to express their own, individual creative art ideas.

The daily routine has been completely reviewed since the last inspection, providing a good balance of adult-led and self-chosen activities, giving children more choice and independence in their learning. The assessment system has been improved to include individual targets for each child, discussed on a weekly basis to inform planning. Children have daily opportunities for expressing their creative ideas in various forms such as painting, modelling, dough, drawing and messy play. However, some adult-led activities such as making Easter cards, are still over-directed and do not encourage children's individual creativity.

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 the staff recruitment procedures to include all aspects of suitability.

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 systems to obtain information from parents to help ascertain children's starting points in the Foundation Stage.

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