

Four Oaks Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	229110
Inspection date	08 February 2008
Inspector	Karen Cooper
Setting Address	Four Oaks Junior & Infant School, Edge Hill Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 4PA
Telephone number	07966 147 584
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Edge Hill Pre-School Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Four Oaks Pre-School Playgroup has been operating for approximately 25 years. It operates from self-contained premises located within the grounds of Four Oaks Primary School in Sutton Coldfield. There is a fully enclosed outdoor area available for play. Most children live locally but there are no restrictions and vacancies are available to all who apply.

The group is open term time only Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00 and on Wednesdays until 15:00. There are currently 42 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 24 receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group employs five staff. All of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. Staff are supported by a parent committee and the group has Pre-School Learning Alliance membership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in warm, clean, premises where they are taught the importance of personal care. They are familiar with the daily routine and can clearly explain what the pictures depict that are displayed in the bathroom, for example, washing their hands after using the toilet. There are suitable arrangements in place to care for children who are ill and the written sickness policy is shared with parents upon commencement of the group. Staff are trained in administering first aid and several have attended further training in procedures to support children with specific health needs, for example to use epipens in case of anaphylactic shock. This gives opportunities for a wider range of children to experience the service offered. Staff have obtained the appropriate permissions and records in place regarding accidents and medication which are shared with parents.

Staff encourage children to have healthy eating habits through daily routines and planned topics. Children are encouraged to enjoy food and understand why some foods are healthy and others are not. Snack times are relaxed social occasions when staff and children sit together around the table to enjoy their food and each others' company. Children are provided with regular drinks and jugs of water are always available.

Children are encouraged to understand that exercise helps them to stay healthy through daily routines and regular use of the well-equipped outdoor area. Children competently use push-alongs, wheeled toys and climbing equipment. They confidently use musical instruments to tap out beats to familiar tunes and enjoy meeting the challenge of balancing when using plastic circles which are placed on the floor. This helps children to develop their confidence to enjoy moving with control, using their bodies in various ways.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children use an extensive range of toys and resources that are of good quality and safe. Equipment is kept clean and in a good state of repair and is regularly checked for safety. Careful consideration is given to the organisation and storage of play materials to ensure children can make independent choices. Children are becoming increasingly aware of potential hazards and the possible consequences their actions may have on their own safety, for example, children know they must request help from staff to obtain toys that are out of reach.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. They move freely and safely around the premises because staff are vigilant and carry out rigorous safety checks and risk assessments to ensure the children are protected from harm. Effective security systems ensure that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised and there are clear procedures to ensure only authorised people collect them. Children are beginning to learn about their own safety through discussion. They gain a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire and regularly practise emergency evacuation procedures to ensure they are aware of where to go to stay safe. This helps children to begin to take responsibility for themselves and others. Appropriate fire equipment such as, fire extinguishers, fire blanket and smoke detectors are provided and are regularly checked to ensure they are in good working order.

Staff have a good understanding of their role and responsibility to protect children in their care. They are aware of signs and symptoms of possible abuse and know the appropriate procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child. They regularly attend training to ensure their knowledge and skills are updated and there is a clear child protection statement which staff ensure is shared with parents. However, not all staff are familiar with the procedures to follow in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children respond well to the stimulating environment. They know the routines and are keen to join in with the activities. Good, relationships between the staff and children are evident, they communicate easily with each other, which helps the children to enjoy their time at the group. They enter the group enthusiastically behave well and are confident and happy during the time they spend there. They are keen to join in all activities and select tasks independently. Children are valued and staff help them to feel good about themselves by frequently providing positive support, praise and encouragement. Children's self-esteem is positively promoted because staff display children's work and photographs around the playroom.

Staff are sensitive to new children's concerns over absent parents or carers. They offer them reassurance and comfort, whilst engaging them in purposeful activities. Children are encouraged to make independent choices about their play and staff plan and prepare activities to encourage children to develop skills and have fun. They adapt the planning for younger children and use the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively to involve children and further their development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result, children are making good progress towards the six areas of learning. Staff have a generally good understanding of the Foundation Stage, the stepping stones, and how children learn. They plan a good variety of play opportunities to cover all areas of learning. Plans are linked to the stepping stones and reflect learning intentions for the focussed activities. However, activities are not sufficiently evaluated to ensure that the information gained is used effectively to inform future planning. Staff monitor children's progress through observations and use assessments to demonstrate the progress they are making towards the six areas of learning.

Children become fully engaged in their self-chosen activities and persevere well with tasks, for example, making dragons for the Chinese New Year. They are keen to learn and participate in all activities made available to them and are purposely occupied at all times. They are relaxed and settled. This enables them to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children's language is actively encouraged and developing well. Most engage easily in conversations with other children and adults and talk about different events in their lives with growing confidence. Staff listen attentively to what children have to say and ask constructive questions to stimulate their thinking. Children enjoy listening to stories and make good use of the book area during free play sessions. They spontaneously use books, and ask staff to read stories to them. They enjoy listening to stories and eagerly join in with familiar ones such as 'Where's My Teddy'. The environment is rich in print and number and children have many opportunities to practise their early writing skills. They have easy access to a good variety of different writing materials which they use with increasing confidence.

Children learn to count, sort, match and sequence as they play. Staff encourage younger children to count up to five whilst older, more able children can count up to 10 and beyond. They talk about size and shapes in their environment and staff make full use of the daily routines to reinforce children's understanding of letters sounds and number recognition. Children have easy access to the computer each day and show a keen interest in technology. There is a good range of suitable software programmes to aid children's understanding of letters, numbers, shapes and colours. Most children are able to navigate around the learning programme using the computer mouse with ease and confidence. They learn about the natural world around them such as planting and watching mushrooms and bean sprouts growing. Through discussion and planned activities children are learning about other cultures. Photographic evidence shows children involved in a wide variety of craft activities, for example, finger painting, junk modelling, cutting out, cooking, play dough and collage.

Children benefit from daily opportunities to take part in physical play. They move confidently around the indoor space and the outdoor area is designed to offer challenges, such as climbing and balancing. They show great enthusiasm when using their imagination in role play when they take on familiar family roles, such as mommy and daddy. Children are engaged and motivated to learn.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are highly valued as individuals and treated with equal concern. They receive good support from staff to meet their individual needs effectively. Children have equal access to all toys and resources regardless of their ability, gender or background. Their individual needs are discussed openly with parents and any specific requirements are shared with staff to ensure their needs are met.

Children receive praise and encouragement, and learn what is right and wrong. As a result children play co-operatively together and their behaviour is good. They learn to take turns, share and be responsible for their own behaviours. Staff act as positive role models and ensure that parents are fully aware of the group's behaviour management policy. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers regarding nursery education is good. Staff welcome parents into the group and strives to establish positive partnerships. They promote parental participation on a rota system and give parents clear and meaningful tasks to undertake. Parents are well informed about the group's policies and practices through written documentation and regular discussions. All aspects of children's individual needs are discussed and agreed with parents. Settling in sessions are used to support children effectively in the transition from home to playgroup. Time at the beginning of each session is made available for parents to settle their children and talk with staff. All parents know their child's key worker and share information with them about their children. Regular newsletters, parent evenings and display boards ensure parents are well informed of the activities on offer and the progress their children are making towards the six areas of learning. It is evident from speaking to several parents as part of this inspection how pleased they are with the care and service offered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff have created a child centred environment which encourages children to feel welcome. Toys and resources are attractively presented to encourage children to become engaged in activities as soon as they arrive. There is a good balance between adult-supported and child-led activities and the environment is well organised and stimulates children's interests. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are cared for by suitable and qualified staff. Staff are happy, motivated and work effectively as a team. Staff ratios and group size positively supports children's learning and play.

Children's personal information is stored securely, which helps to maintain confidentiality. All required documentation is well organised and regularly reviewed including children's attendance records which are accurately maintained.

Leadership and management is good. The management team is committed to continued improvement and welcomes support from other professionals, including school staff. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and have access to further training to develop their knowledge and skills successfully. The manager works directly with the children and works closely with staff to ensure children's learning needs are met effectively. There are well-established links with the groups committee members who work effectively with staff to evaluate and monitor the service offered. This helps to ensure the group fulfils its vision to provide a good quality standard of care for children and provides maximum learning opportunities.

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 provider was requested to: continue to encourage staff to maintain their professional development, for example with an appraisal system to ensure that training needs are identified and met; develop job descriptions to identify different levels of responsibility and roles, specifically for a deputy leader; ensure that children are given time to play and learn independently, initiate their own activities and explore freely; ensure that records of what children can do are used to plan the next steps in their learning and play; include hours of attendance in the daily record of children looked after; and ensure that within the large group there are times when children are split into groups according to age, ability and needs.

High priority is given to staff development and training. Systems are well developed to evaluate and monitor staff performance and development and all staff have clear defined role responsibilities. Children are keen to join in all activities and select tasks independently. Staff plan a good variety of play opportunities to cover all areas of development and staff ratios and group sizes positively support children's learning and play. Documentation is regularly reviewed including children's attendance records which are accurately maintained.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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):

- improve staff's knowledge of child protection procedures with particular regard to an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff

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):

- improve the evaluation of activities to ensure the information gained is used effectively to improve future planning.

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