

Bridge Village Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127044
Inspection date	11 February 2008
Inspector	Cilla Rachel Mullane
Setting Address	Bridge Village Hall, High Street, Bridge, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 5JY
Telephone number	01227 831475
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Registered person	Bridge Village 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Bridge Village Playgroup opened in 1982. It operates from the village hall in Bridge, near Canterbury. The playgroup has access to two rooms, toilets and a kitchen. The group serves the local area and surrounding villages.

There are currently 31 children on roll. This includes 23 funded 3 and 4 year old children.

Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The staff have experience of working with children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens five days a week term time only. Sessions last from 09.00 to 12.00. They use the smaller room upstairs on Monday mornings when the older children attend, and the main hall on Tuesday to Friday mornings for all the children.

There are six staff working with the children, one of whom has an early years qualification. One member of staff is currently undertaking an early years qualification. The playgroup receives support from an early years advisor.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children helped to learn about good hygiene: for example, when staff involve them in cleaning the tables. Books such as 'Maisie's bedtime' reinforce the message about the importance of personal hygiene, such as when she washes her hands after using the toilet. Children remember a recent visit from a dental hygienist, and discuss looking after their teeth. Most staff have a first aid qualification, and so have the skills and knowledge to care for children in an emergency. However, the accident record includes several entries on each page, so it is not confidential, and is not always sufficiently detailed. Children use communal bowls of water to wash their hands after messy activities, and before snacks, because the water in the hand wash basins is very hot. This practice increases the spread of infection between children, and compromises their good health.

Children are making healthy choices at snack times: they enjoy fruit, raisins and breadsticks, and choose between milk and water. Fresh water is available at all times, so children can keep their bodies hydrated.

The hall does not have access to an outside play area where children can enjoy vigorous activity. However, staff compensate very effectively for this by taking the children out frequently. Therefore, children benefit from playing outside in the fresh air. The current theme is linked to the outings, for example, children recognise shapes in the environment, such as octagonal road signs and the oval post office sign. They mark-make in the mud. They develop their large muscle groups running on the field, increasing their coordination and spatial awareness. They go out in most weathers, but if really inclement, they play on challenging equipment indoors, such as the balance beam and stilts. Children's small motor skills are improving as they complete puzzles, cut and stick.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff work really hard to set up the playgroup before the children arrive so that it is welcoming to children. There are clearly designated areas, such as a maths area and mark-making table. Furthermore, the resources set out daily ensure that children take part in activities which cover all areas of learning. Children make especially good use of the book area, cuddling up with staff on the soft seating, and the well resourced craft table and role play areas. Staff are gradually updating and increasing the range of toys and equipment. For example, they have recently bought a programmable toy and musical instruments, so children have access to a good range. However, the dressing up clothes are not attractively presented to the children.

Staff have fully considered safety in the Hunter room upstairs, and made appropriate changes and improvements to ensure children's safety. For example, there are always two members of staff present. Children practise the evacuation procedure regularly, and there are effective systems in place to ensure that all staff and children who attend on different days are included in the drills. Children are kept safe on outings. Staff are very vigilant regarding the children's safety, taking their records, first aid kit and telephone, and children wear high visibility jackets. Children are learning to look after themselves when outside the setting: they confidently discuss road safety, and know that they need to stop, look and listen. The water in the wash basins is too hot, which means that children must be accompanied and carefully supervised in the toilet

area, limiting their independence. The radiators in the hall are very hot, which has the potential to compromise children's safety.

One member of staff has recently updated child protection training, and discussed this with her team. In addition, all staff have access to up to date information regarding safeguarding children procedures. Therefore, staff have sufficient current information to enable them to act promptly and correctly if they had concerns about the children. However, the playgroup's procedure for safeguarding children has not been updated to reflect staff's knowledge, or current procedures, so parents are not accurately informed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff interact with the children warmly, showing them that they value their contributions and achievements. Children benefit from the strong positive relationships which they have developed with staff. Children are therefore confident, happy and secure. There is a happy, busy atmosphere, with all children engaged, interested and motivated. Staff are available to support the activities, to extend the children's play, but they also know when to leave them alone to develop their own activities. Children love looking at the scrap books which staff prepare, with photos of recent outings, visitors and activities.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Staff are really good at talking to the children, and engaging them in conversation, for example, about events which have happened at home. Therefore, children are becoming sociable and confident. There is an emphasis on children's free choice from a variety of resources and toys set out daily, so children can play and learn according to their individual interests and at their own pace. In addition, children are helped to learn new skills during a daily adult led activity. They, therefore, enjoy a good balance and variety of play and learning experiences.

The planning of the adult led activities shows that all areas of learning are covered. Staff carry out occasional observations of the children, which are recorded and show generally where they are on the stepping stones. However, these observations are not used effectively to plan children's intended next steps, so activities are not planned to meet individual children's needs. As a result, children do not always receive an appropriate level of challenge. However, the staff know the children well, and are therefore able to set challenges for them, for example, by giving children more difficult puzzles, but there is no clear process for ensuring all children regularly challenged. Children enjoy open ended activities, and develop these independently, for example, an activity which started as children painting representation of themselves, developed into exploring the colours and textures of the paints. Children are allowed and enabled to learn at their own pace, to persevere and concentrate. For example, a child spent a long time completing a difficult puzzle, and another painted an intricate picture, using brushes and her hands.

As a result of sound teaching, children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Children are confident: they approach staff for help and conversation, and speak confidently in a big group. They are making friends and are kind to one another: a child spent time helping fasten her friend's coat. They are developing a sense of humour: a child laughed as she surprised

a member of staff by tickling her with a feather. Children are missing opportunities to act independently, for example, taking themselves to the toilets (because the water is too hot), and they do not help to prepare their own snacks, or pour their own drinks. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing well. They visit the mark-making table frequently, and attempt to write their names and messages in cards. Staff sometimes draw their attention to letters and the sounds they make, but they do not make consistent use of a phonics programme.

A maths table is available daily, and so children are learning about shapes and numbers. Staff are good at using positional language, for example, asking children to look behind or under an object. Children count regularly during the day, for example, during group time, and are encouraged to think about simple calculation, such as working out 'how many more will we need?'. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing as they use programmable toys. They are fascinated by how the toy washing machine works, and help staff to change batteries with screwdrivers. However, a computer is not available on a regular basis. Children's creativity is encouraged, and they have free access to craft materials. They spontaneously make cards for mummy, with glue and feathers, and write messages inside. They concentrate for long periods on painting, carefully painting their hands to print, and naming their work on completion.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy meaningful opportunities to learn about their local community through topics such as 'home, houses, families, schools and churches'. Furthermore, during their bi-weekly local walks, they chat about their environment, noticing features of the natural and man-made world around them. Children have good links within the community, such as visiting the post office for stamps at Christmas, and the shop for buns at Easter. Visitors to the playgroup show children different types of people and jobs, for example, Morris men, gardeners and the police.

Children's behaviour is good as they learn what is acceptable, and become aware of their own and others' feelings. Staff are excellent role models, showing kindness and respect by example. Staff have high expectations of the children's behaviour, so children receive consistent messages. Children respond positively to staffs' praise and appreciation of their efforts and achievements, for example, showing pleasure and pride when staff show their paintings to other adults.

There are currently no children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on role, but a trained special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has links with other professionals for support and advice, and has resources and knowledge to enable her to identify and work effectively with children who need extra help.

Partnership with parents is good.

Parents are really happy with the care and education of their children. They are pleased to be allowed to stay to settle their child. They are impressed with the staff, and feel that they know the children well and treat them as individuals. They feel that there is a good variety of activities, especially crafts. Parents and carers receive a report about their child each term, and can add their comments. The reports are very thorough, positive and personal, set out according to the six areas of learning, and colour coded showing where children are on the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. A letter accompanies this report, explaining the curriculum

for the Foundation Stage. Therefore, parents receive good information about their child's progress.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The playgroup meets the needs of the range of children for whom care and education are provided.

Staff are experienced and competent, and regularly attend relevant short courses such as the introduction to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and health and safety training. However, insufficient staff have early years qualifications. Staff work well together as a team, and clearly enjoy their work, and their interactions with the children.

The pace and routine of the sessions meets the needs of the children, for example, they have a satisfactory choice of activities, time to complete what they are doing, and no time is wasted pointlessly waiting and queuing.

Most records required for the effective running of the playgroup are kept to a satisfactory standard, with the exception of the accident record. However, the setting's policies and procedures, both regulatory (i.e. child protection, lost and uncollected children, and complaints), and non regulatory, sometimes do not reflect local or current guidelines, and are not consistently unique to the playgroup.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

The playgroup staff have made a great deal of progress since the last inspection, and most of the recommendations have been fully and successfully addressed, enhancing the care and education of the children. They have a very positive attitude to change and improvement, and are committed to providing a good service for children and carers.

The supervisor has a clear and realistic view of what the playgroup does well: for example, she feels that it is important to all the staff to treat children as individuals, value them all, and show all children that they are special. She is equally clear about areas for development, for example, the planning and use of observations to inform planning, and planning for individual children using knowledge of their interests.

Staff have considered and evaluated the quality of the care and education offered to the children, and identified areas for improvement. For example, they now arrange staff meetings so that staff can have contact with those who work on different days. However, the self evaluation folder does not always give timescales for improvement, or indicate if any action has been taken, and is therefore not a totally effective tool for ensuring development and progress.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of nursery education the playgroup agreed to provide more opportunities for creative development and to improve the programme for mathematics. Children now benefit from daily opportunities to be creative, and they regularly access the maths area. They also agreed to provide information to parents about the curriculum and their children's progress

towards the early learning goals. Parents are now well informed. In addition, the playgroup has made some progress towards evaluating the success of activities, and staff continue to develop the use of observations to inform planning.

At the last inspection of the care offered the setting agreed to improve the children's safety by ensuring the premises are safe and secure and fire safety measures are adequate, by developing staffs' awareness of child protection issues and procedures, by keeping all records relating to day care activities on the premises and available for inspection, and by ensuring that medication is administered according to a safe policy. Children are now kept safe in all these respects. Children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. All children now have a keyworker. Policies and procedures have been updated, but do not consistently reflect current guidance, and this remains a recommendation.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 hand washing procedures are hygienic
- ensure that the water in the wash basins, and the radiators in the hall are set at a safe temperature
- ensure that the accident record is confidential and sufficiently detailed
- ensure that all policies and procedures, including the safeguarding children policy, lost and uncollected children procedures, and complaints procedures, fully reflect current guidance and the pre-school's practice.

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to act independently and develop self help skills (this recommendation also applies to care)
- develop the use of observations to identify children's intended next steps and interests, and incorporate these into the planning, so activities challenge all children and build on what they already know.

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