

Potters Green Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY347590 |
| Inspection date | 06 May 2008 |
| Inspector | Hayley Lapworth |
| Setting Address | Potters Green Community Association, Community Centre, Wigston Road, COVENTRY, CV2 2QR |
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| Registered person | Potters Green Community Association - sub committee |
| 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?

Potters Green Playgroup is situated in Potters green, Coventry. The group operates from the Potters Green Community Centre premises in the large hall and associated facilities. The group serves the local community. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open during term time on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 09.00 until 11.45 and a lunch time club until 13:00 hrs. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children aged from two to under five years on roll. This includes 14 children who have funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Support is available for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language.

Six staff work directly with the children. Over half the staff hold a relevant qualification in childcare, the manager and deputy have a National Vocational Qualification Level 3 and above. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because they are cared for in premises that are warm and generally clean. This is because staff check areas prior to the children accessing them. Children are encouraged by staff to contribute to keeping indoor areas tidy as they help to tidy up. This helps to develop their independence.

Children's health is supported because relevant information is obtained from parents, and understood by staff, regarding their medical history, any allergies or dietary needs. Children receive prompt, appropriate care in the event of an accident or if they become unwell. Some staff have current first aid qualifications. A suitable first aid box is maintained and detailed accident and medication records are kept so parents are fully informed of any incidents affecting their children. Children are suitably protected from cross-infection most of the time because the group have introduced an effective hand washing procedure and have a clear sickness and exclusion policy. Parents are also kept informed through written updates of any changes.

Children's independence is generally fostered during personal care routines. They are able to visit the toilet independently, with staff giving discreet support when needed. Younger children's comfort is supported by toilet training arrangements which are discussed and agreed with parents. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of the importance of personal hygiene as they are encouraged to wash their hands before snack and lunch. In addition some staff explain to the children about why they need to wash their hands and demonstrate to them how to do it properly.

Many of the children are physically active and really enjoy the outdoor play area. They confidently climb and slide on fixed apparatus and run to the steps to take their next turn. They are protected from the sun on hot days as parents are given helpful advice about protecting their children. For example, they are asked to provide hats and cream. Children are able to relax as quieter activities, or a comfortable place for a rest or sleep, are provided.

Children's dietary needs are met because staff find out about their individual needs. Fresh fruit and snacks are available to all children during the session. They are also provided with drinks of milk and water at snack time. However, drinking water is not easily accessible to children throughout the session. This restricts them in meeting their own bodies needs when they are thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The setting provides a warm welcome with some displays of children's work and photographs of them involved in activities. The children enjoy some independent access to resources which are safely stored. The group have taken some steps to minimise potential hazards and keep children safe. For example, they manage the walk to and from the outdoor play area well. This includes encouraging children to walk with a partner and stay close to the building. However, other methods to promote children's safety are not always effectively implemented. For example, the visitors' book is not always completed, a fire procedure is not always displayed and gates are not locked when children are playing outdoors. These potentially impact on the children's overall safety.

Children's welfare is generally safeguarded because some staff clearly understand their role in child protection. They have an appropriate knowledge of the symptoms of child abuse and what action to take if they have concerns about a child. Senior staff are aware of the procedure to follow if an allegation is made against them or a volunteer. Relevant child protection procedures and guidance are available for the managers' and staff's reference. Consequently, children's general welfare is enhanced.

Children's safety is generally enhanced because the group regularly operate with the child to staff ratios above the minimum requirements, the staff are deployed generally well and children are always supervised.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy throughout their time in the setting. Many play with their friends in a relaxed environment and devise their own play. This is best demonstrated by the way some children wait for their friends to arrive and invite one another into their games. For example, they ask 'do you want to play cars with me today'. This shows they are comfortable in their surroundings.

The setting are just beginning to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework as a reference tool to provide a range of activities. This means that younger children are beginning to access suitable experiences that contribute towards their development. For example, they benefit from play opportunities which develop their language and social skills such as the role play area where they act out being 'mummy and daddy'. During play children are supported by some staff who they are comfortable with and are building meaningful relationships. For example, they chat to them about events in their own lives. Some children are beginning to develop confidence in speaking in a group. This is most evident at registration time when they greet one another good morning. Some children are less confident in group situations and choose not to answer to their name when called. Staff support them well in this situation and introduce a bit of fun by asking children to respond with a 'snorting piggy noise' to answer the register. As a result, all children contribute and feel valued. Children enjoy looking at books individually and seek support from staff who are deployed into the reading area to read favourites with them.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff have a suitable understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn. Three and four-year-olds access some suitable experiences that relate to the six areas of learning helping them to make suitable progress in their development. The activities the children access are resourced appropriately and reflected in the groups planning. However, staff are not involved and the planning and evaluation process is not fully effective. As a result, the delivery of some of the planned activities are weak as staff are not clear on the learning objectives and targets for individual children. This means that children's learning may be compromised. Senior staff have recently made changes to the way they plan activities and are in the very early stages of beginning to consider how to extend learning for more and less able children. Therefore, at present some children do not always benefit from additional challenge. Children's achievements are monitored by staff who make some observations of their learning and are beginning to link them to the stepping stones.

Some of the more able children are beginning to understand that print carries meaning and are developing early writing skills. They have opportunities to be creative and write for a purpose, this is evident as they attempt to write their names on their own work. They have regular access to writing implements. Children's name cards are suitably used to promote letter recognition and sounds. For example, at registration time staff show the children the name on the card and introduce the letter sound which starts the name. For those who are less able to recognise sounds and letters, their name is shown to them along with a photograph. This enables all children to take part at a level which relates to their individual stage of development

Children are developing a satisfactory understanding of numbers and how to count. Number shapes and counting in sequence are introduced through a variety of songs such as 'five little monkeys sitting in a tree'. Some children also use mathematical language in their self-initiated games. This is best demonstrated in the home corner where two children dressed up and then discussed and compared the size of their handbags and heels using vocabulary like 'big' and 'bigger'.

Children are developing skills in communication and language. They express themselves through role play, dressing up, singing and dancing. During play they talk to one another and discuss what they are doing, for example, 'lets go this way to the party'. They thoroughly enjoy hearing music and songs on the compact disc player which relate to their favourite television characters. Through the role play area the children use their imaginations to re-enact familiar events and life experiences such as 'going to a party' and looking after the babies in games of 'mums and dads'.

Children have regular opportunities and suitable experiences to enhance their physical development. They have a large indoor play space where they access some large equipment. The outdoor play area encourages skills in climbing, balancing, coordination and manoeuvring their bodies.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are generally effectively supported. This is achieved because during the settling in period staff collate information from parents about children's individual needs. Staff actively monitor any potential concerns and work alongside other professionals and parents. For example, in agreement with parents staff contact relevant agencies and make referrals if they feel a child in their care may need additional support. As a result, children are provided with specific tailored care.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children learn about some aspects of diversity through using resources and taking part in activities which focus on aspects of religion and disability. This is best demonstrated through their involvement in celebrating some religious festivals such as Diwali and Easter.

Some children in the group are learning how to behave well and most share good relationships with their peers and familiar adults. Written procedures are in place to guide staff on how to deal with undesirable behaviour. Included within this is a detailed procedure to be followed in the event of bullying. Because of this, parents know how matters involving bullying will be dealt with. However, some staff do not always give the children an explanation as to why they need to behave in a particular way. Consequently, at times this leaves children confused about what they have done wrong.

Children's needs are suitably met because staff build relationships with parents at the onset of care. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting and given some appropriate information about the group, including the policies and procedures. Staff provide a warm atmosphere, they regularly chat and spend time with parents to get to know the family. The group encourage parents and carers to be involved in the setting in the early stages and share information about their child's care, home routines and interests. This helps the staff get to know the children and their individual needs well. However, following the settling in period little more is done to further involve parents and they are not effectively encouraged to spend time in the nursery. Consequently, they are not involved in their children's learning whilst at the setting.

Parents who spoke to the inspector share that their children are happy to come in the mornings and sometimes sad to leave. They feel the staff know the children's personalities well and describe examples of how staff have worked on specific issues with them. They say staff are friendly and approachable, however, some would like more information on their children's academic learning.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. Sufficient information about the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning is made available to parents. This is because the planning of activities is also appropriately displayed for parents to view. However, other than the plans parents are provided with, little other information about the Foundation Stage is available. Therefore, parents are not well informed or aware of how their children's learning is structured. Staff say they are in the process of organising progress evenings with parents and intend to discuss the Foundation Stage. However, at present staff do not access information about individual children's development to effectively determine their starting points. Consequently, children's learning at the point of entry is potentially restricted.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from an environment that is suitably organised. This ensures they have access to appropriate learning opportunities inside and outdoors. Some staff have worked together for many years, although overall the staff team is newly formed and they are beginning to develop working relationships. Some staff support one another and share responsibility well. For example, they work together setting up the hall and share their observations about changes in children's behaviour and food intake at snack time.

Staff are generally deployed into areas effectively, this ensures the children are suitably supervised and makes them feel secure in their surroundings. Children are suitably cared for as all necessary information and parental consents are in place. Records are generally maintained and stored appropriately. This ensures that confidentiality is respected at all times.

Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that the staff have suitable qualifications and experience to work with children. Staff training needs are in the process of being identified along with the groups training development plans. Some staff are keen to enhance their professional development. At present over half of the staff team hold early years qualifications, which contributes to the quality of the setting and provides the children with satisfactory care.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of early education is satisfactory. Leaders are in the process of looking at their individual roles and jobs they can delegate to staff, rather than trying to be involved at every level. They are also looking at staff motivation and how to

involve the staff in areas such as planning. Senior staff clearly enjoy working with the children and provide a hands on approach alongside staff in the play room. Management are in the early stages of beginning to evaluate the setting's practice to ensure children have valuable learning experiences that relate to the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals. This includes looking at staffs strengths and weaknesses and identifying their training needs. The group are presently drawing up a training and development plan alongside their early years mentor from the local authority. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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 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):

- make sure that all staff enable children to learn right from wrong by implementing the groups behaviour management strategy effectively
- improve the safety of the children by ensuring the fire drill procedure is displayed at all times, making sure the outdoor area is secure when in use and promote the use of the visitor's record at all times
- make sure that drinking water is available at all times throughout the session.

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 parents' awareness of the intentions of the Foundation Stage, the areas of learning and how children progress through the stepping stones, by obtaining information in relation to their starting points and providing more opportunities for them to be involved

- involve staff and improve planning and evaluation of children's learning and progress to ensure staff and parents have a consistent clear overview of children's strengths and their learning needs, so that staff can plan effectively to support their individual areas for development.

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