

North Muskham Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253292
Inspection date	01 July 2008
Inspector	Christine Hands
Setting Address	Village Hall, Nelson Lane, North Muskham, Nottinghamshire, NG23 6HL
Telephone number	01636 708592
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Registered person	Muskham 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

North Muskham Playgroup opened in 1991. It operates from the Village Hall and the group has access to two large rooms, a kitchen and appropriate toilet facilities. The building is shared with other users. The playgroup has direct access onto the village playing field and uses an area of this for outdoor play. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open Wednesday and Thursday from 09:00 to 11:30 hours and a lunch club is run from 11:30 to 13:00 on Wednesday. The group are also registered at the adjacent school and operate from there at other times. The group is open term-time only.

There are currently 34 children aged two to five years on roll. Of these children 18 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the village and surrounding areas. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup employs four core staff who work directly with children and has additional relief staff available. Most of the staff, including the supervisor hold an appropriate early years qualification, with other staff working towards qualifications for their role. The playgroup is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in premises that are clean and hygienic and where they are learning how to keep themselves healthy. They follow good personal hygiene routines as they wash their hands appropriately and use tissues to blow their noses, disposing of them in the bins provided. They are beginning to gain an understanding both through discussion as well as through a variety of activities, how they can keep themselves healthy. When playing outside children ask for their sun cream explaining that it is to stop them from becoming sunburnt. Another child eagerly showed his sunglasses and explained that he needed these when it was sunny. Staff minimise the risk of infection as they follow current hygiene guidelines and policies when cleaning tables and preparing snacks. Children receive prompt and caring attention in the case of an accident because a well-stocked first-aid kit is readily available, there are qualified first aiders on site and full details are recorded on their admission forms which include allergies and permission for staff to obtain medical treatment or advice in the case of an emergency. All accidents, incidents and existing injuries are suitably recorded and signed by parents. Procedures for administering medication are also in place although this is rarely undertaken.

Children enjoy a wide selection of healthy snacks which at times they help prepare themselves such as when making sandwiches, with some children choosing ham and another raw carrots. This was an activity enjoyed by all and promoted discussion about the types of foods that are healthy. The playgroup promotes a healthy eating policy and this is often mentioned in newsletters and asking for support from parents when packing lunch boxes. Lunch and snack times are seen as social occasions with staff providing good role models by sitting at the tables and eating with the children. Children benefit from the fact that throughout the session they are able to help themselves to water to prevent them becoming thirsty.

Children's physical skills are developing well through daily use of the playing field where they run around, kick and throw balls as well as practising for sports day and playing with smaller objects. In the main hall when unable to play outside they have exercise and dance sessions building on their balance and co-ordination. Their fine hand skills are developing well doing such things as using scissors, spreading butter on their bread, threading beads and completing jigsaw puzzles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and welcoming environment where they are able to move around safely and freely. Positive steps are taken to minimise risks to children through the use of comprehensive written risk assessments which are undertaken daily before the children arrive. Security within the playgroup is robust with both inner and outer doors being locked, a member of staff greeting children and parents as they arrive and parents signing their children in and out of the group. The supervisor also completes her register as they arrive. Children are beginning to gain an understanding of ways in which they can help to keep themselves safe. They understand that when playing outside they must not go beyond the temporary barriers that have been installed using traffic cones and tape and wait for a member of staff to fetch any balls that have gone outside this area. Regular fire evacuation practises and instructions from staff regarding such things as the safe use of scissors further develop their understanding of safety issues.

The protection of children is considered of paramount importance and all staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Some staff have attended child protection courses and all are aware of the current information regarding what they should do if they are worried a child is being abused as well as the signs and symptoms that could give them concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and confident in the setting moving freely from one activity to another. They snuggle up on the duvet to look at books, play with the cars and animals as well as investigating the various craft activities available. There is a good balance of free-play and adult-led activities and because staff know the children and their interests well these are adapted to encourage all children to take part. Children are good communicators because staff spend time talking to them about things which interest them, for example, where they had been or were going on holiday. These conversations developed into making the role play area into an airport and travel agency promoting further conversation and activities. Children have many opportunities to foster their imagination and creativity in a wide range of craft activities which are adapted for differing levels such as some pre-cut shapes as well as scissors and paper to cut their own, however the 'Birth to three matters' framework is not used effectively to plan activities for younger children.

Warm and caring relationships between staff and children are very evident with children receiving praise and encouragement alongside cuddles. Staff spend time listening and showing an interest in what children have to say enabling them to feel valued and supported.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum. Staff work well together creating a stimulating, welcoming and supportive environment. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan activities to cover all areas of learning. Observations are clearly recorded and staff have a good understanding of development needs, however planning does not clearly link to these and the lack of a base line assessment does not enable staff to fully monitor their progress. Planning does not show any differentiation for children nor does it clearly show the next steps in children's learning. The group have recently changed how they operate with regard to providing a 'free flow' environment for children and maximising the space and opportunities, however this is still in its early stages and as yet planning for the outdoors is not in place. Focussed activities are evaluated but again these do not show any differentiation. Staff recognise that in order for some activities to fully benefit the children the use of small groups is essential. Staff provide a calm and harmonious atmosphere which encourages children to enjoy their play and learning experiences. They listen to what children have to say and encourage them in decision making, giving them the opportunity to express themselves and develop their thoughts and ideas.

Children are interested in the range of activities provided and happily choose resources during free play. They show a strong sense of belonging as they understand that they are respected and listened to as individuals. Children are confident and fluent speakers eagerly approaching staff and other adults and initiating conversations such as talking about the places they have been to or would like to go to on holiday. Through such discussions and activities they demonstrate that they have a good understanding of time with regard to past and future events. Children have a sense of belonging both within the playgroup as they look for their names and

bags as well as when they talk about their family, pets and where they live. They are learning to be independent as they put on their shoes after having taken them off in the tent, pour their own drinks, wipe noses and help themselves to the snacks they would like to eat. Children are gaining a love of books and relax in the comfy book area either with their friends, individually or with a member of staff. They avidly listen to stories and join in with the parts they know such as the story of the lazy farmer and the duck. Although children have access to writing implements and make use of these in different areas and also recognise their own names they have few opportunities for exploring phonics. Children confidently use numbers throughout the session and are gaining an understanding of the concepts of number. For example they talk about a 'long snake' when playing with playdough, calculating how many cars or animals will fit into a certain space and addition and subtraction when looking at camels in a bag. They compare sizes as they draw round cars and other vehicles. Shape and position are used throughout the sessions in a variety of different activities. Children have very good opportunities to find out about the natural world and enjoy exploring their environment as they go for walks as well as when planting and caring for seeds. They develop their senses through experiencing a wide range of textures such as craft materials, compost, wet and dry sand and water as well as when tasting a variety of foods such as Chinese. Children are confident in their use of information, communication and technology equipment as they programme and use the computer and use a digital camera to record their activities. The benefits of the camera are enormous and provides them with the opportunities to look at and talk about their pictures which have been downloaded onto the computer. Children talk with interest about their own lives and enquire about the lives of other visitors. They are developing a good awareness of space and movement as they learn to negotiate around each other whilst playing such games as football. Their whole body movements are also promoted through activities such as music and movement, parachute play and practising for sports days. The lack of planning for the outdoor area, however, does mean that children are not always sufficiently challenged nor do they have the variety of opportunities needed to fully develop in this area. Children's imaginative, creative and constructive skills are developed through a wide variety of activities such as role play, building with bricks, junk modelling and the creation of pictures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are all welcomed as individuals and because staff know them and their families well through not only the information provided on their admission forms but also through continuous discussion they provide activities that they will enjoy as well as supporting them in areas such as behaviour. Children feel valued and respected within this group as they receive praise and encouragement from staff as well as stickers which they proudly wear. Although currently there are no children attending the group who have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities there are procedures in place to support any in the future. These include members of staff who have attended special educational needs training courses.

Children behave well because staff are consistent in dealing with them, listening to what they have to say whilst firmly explaining why certain types of behaviour are not acceptable. All children are aware of the ethos of the group which includes being kind and helping each other, sharing, taking turns and apologising when necessary. Staff work very closely with parents and other professionals to manage any particularly difficult behaviour, using tailor made strategies and working on a one to one level with children. This is having some excellent results.

Children are beginning to develop an awareness of differences in society by accessing a range of play resources that reflect positive images of the wider world. Activities based on differing

cultures such as tasting food and making dragons for Chinese New Year also widen their experiences.

Staff are fully aware of children's changing needs through regular communication with parents and the use of clear admission forms. Parents are welcomed into the setting as parent helpers as well as being able to stay for as long as necessary to settle their child. A key worker system also helps children to feel secure as they have the consistent support of someone who is known to them. Staff work closely with parents to share information about their child's progress and are available to be spoken with daily. Parents receive a good range of information about the setting which includes a prospectus, information on a parents' notice board and regular newsletters.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. An information leaflet informs parents about the six areas of learning as well as the assessments that staff will undertake to enable them to provide activities to help their child progress, however, they are not asked to provide a base line assessment for their child which prevents staff from becoming aware of the strengths and interests of their children when they first start. Termly open evenings give parents the formal opportunity to view their children's folders, however, they are aware that they can look at them at any time. Staff value any comments written on these by parents and ensure that they are aware that if at any time they would like a discussion with their child's key worker then this can be arranged.

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

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a setting where robust procedures are in place with regard to recruitment and induction of staff ensuring that any person working with the children is suitably qualified and vetted. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff and committee meetings are held regularly providing opportunities to discuss any changes that are needed as well as consolidating what is already working well. Staffing levels are good and staff are deployed effectively to ensure all children are supported in their learning.

Leadership and management of nursery education are satisfactory. Staff work well together as a team providing a caring and happy environment. Training is identified through regular appraisals and staff are committed to undertake this in order to increase their knowledge and understanding of differing areas of child care. There is a strong and committed committee who have a hands on approach to their role and work very closely with the supervisor and staff to find ways in which they can develop the service they are offering. Since the previous inspection staff have begun to play a greater part in planning and the day to day running of the group which has been beneficial in that wider experiences and variety are brought into play as well as taking some of the onus away from the supervisor enabling her to fully develop her own role. This enables her to stand back at times to evaluate the provision. Staff have a sound knowledge of nursery education, however, because planning and assessments need to be developed children's progress is not always maximised. Staff recognise that there are areas for development and are currently receiving good levels of support from the Early Years Development and Curriculum Partnership.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were four actions made regarding safety, behaviour management, child protection and policies and procedures. These actions have all been met and all policies and procedures have been updated and safety measures put in place to ensure that children's safety is safe-guarded. This includes staff knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection. Behaviour management issues have been discussed and through the support obtained from the Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership these have been resolved and staff are becoming skilled at managing differing behavioural needs.

There were four recommendations made with regard to education. These were regarding planning and assessment and although these are being partly carried through to this inspection there has been some progress in this area and plans are already in place to work with the Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership to continue to develop these areas.

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

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 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):

- develop planning by using 'Birth to three matters' as a framework to fully support children under the age of three years.

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):

- continue to develop assessment records and use these to effectively inform planning for each child's next steps
- continue to develop planning to cover all areas of learning including the provision of opportunities for children to develop their understanding of phonics and the use of the outdoor play space

- provide opportunities for children to gain a greater understanding of the use of phonics.

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