



St John's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311284
Inspection date	19 September 2005
Inspector	Ann Law
Setting Address	Fieldhead, Leymoor Road, Golcar, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD7 4QQ
Telephone number	01484 642257
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Registered person	St John's 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?

St John's Playgroup is a voluntary organisation, managed by a committee of parents. It opened in 1984 and operates from two playrooms and the school hall in St John's C of E (A) Junior and Infant school in Golcar, near Huddersfield. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.45 to 15.15 in term time only. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 39 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 29

children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with special needs.

The playgroup employs three staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup operates within the Effective Early Learning Programme, an endorsed quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very clean and hygienically maintained environment. Staff give exceptional support and guidance in encouraging children to gain an excellent understanding of health and hygiene. They actively encourage children to think for themselves and nurture their real desire to make decisions regarding their personal care. For example, staff always ask the question, 'what is the weather like, do you need your coat on to play out?'. Children have a clear understanding of the setting's routines for hand washing after using the toilet and before snack and accessible toilet facilities ensure that all children can become increasingly independent in their personal care.

Staff constantly maximise every opportunity to contribute to children's understanding about healthy living. Daily fruit or vegetables are provided for the children as part of a healthy eating initiative. A recent topic was 'The great big enormous turnip'. This attention to detail promotes healthy eating amongst the children and current displays and posters complement the topic, serving as a continual reminder. Children were actively involved in tasting cooked and raw turnip and discussions regarding the growing of vegetables significantly enhanced children's knowledge of food that is good for you.

Children enjoy very good levels of physical activity which contribute to their good health and physical development. For example, there is free-flow access to the outdoor area for children to take part in physical play when they want to. This promotes a positive attitude to exercise. Children develop increasing control of their bodies when they use hand-eye co-ordination in throwing a ball into a basketball net. Staff are diligent in ensuring that children have regular access to purposeful indoor exercise sessions. The school hall is utilised to ensure that large equipment can be accessed, concentrating on under and over and balancing in a safe environment. This means that children explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating indoor and outdoor experiences.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, very safe indoor and outdoor environment where health and safety policies are fully implemented by all staff. They have safe and independent access to a wide range of good quality age appropriate toys,

furniture and resources, which are easily accessible for safe self-selection. As a result, all children are able to move around safely, freely and independently and this encourages them to initiate their own play and learning.

Staff strategically position themselves around the setting to ensure that children are constantly supervised for safety, without hindering their development. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe in the setting, because staff allow them to take controlled risks. For example, when balancing on beams they have built themselves in the block play. Consequently, the children are learning some sense of danger and gaining knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm.

Children's welfare is promoted appropriately; all staff hold a first aid qualification and all the required procedures and documentation for child protection are in place to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and secure in the welcoming environment of the playgroup. The younger children, who are new to the setting, are comforted and sensitively supported by the staff. This promotes their emotional well-being. Staff are very attentive to the children and provide an interesting and stimulating setting for the children, which keeps them very busy. As a result, the children are very settled and extremely well-behaved. Staff have a secure knowledge of how most children learn and progress. However, the limited awareness of the different frameworks to support younger children's learning and development means that, on occasion, they are not fully catered for in the planning of activities. Children make many choices and take decisions throughout the sessions as they have unrestricted access to all the activities which are well-presented for them. This gives them the confidence to take toys across different areas and make connections in their learning. For example, children who have an interest in dinosaurs play with them in the block play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning are good. The dedicated and committed staff team have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn. They are very interested in the children and constantly interact with them. Staff skilfully extend children's learning at every opportunity, for example learning by association and encourage the children to think of other things that are yellow, green and blue. The children confidently associate the sun, grass and the sky. Children's good progress towards the early learning goals is recorded against the stepping stones. Although their informative records clearly highlight the progress towards the early learning goals, children's next steps for learning are not sufficiently identified nor used to inform the future planning for individual children's learning. However, the general planning system is regularly evaluated to ensure that the children are offered a broad and balanced curriculum.

Children are very confident in entering the setting and settle quickly into the familiar and trusted routine of the playgroup. They display motivation and engagement as

they independently select and take part in self-chosen activities. Children are very caring towards each other, for example showing concern when another child has a plaster on her knee. Children listen to stories with increasing attention and recall. They enthusiastically join in with favourite stories such as 'Little Rabbit Foo Foo', recognising the rhythm in the spoken word and eagerly predicting what comes next. Older 3-year olds demonstrate self-assurance when they attempt to write their own names, seeking out staff members to share their achievements.

Children are competent counters, younger 3-year-olds count to 5 and older 3-year-olds confidently input the numbers 1 to 9 on a calculator. Children show an interest in number problems posed in everyday activities, for example singing. They confidently work out how many currant buns are left if 'one was bought and taken away'. Children show great interest in simple information and communication technology and are adept in using a mouse to complete basic computer programmes. They are keen to sort objects by function, for example naming all the sea creatures in the water tray and confidently naming the goat as the odd one out, because 'he lives in a field, not the sea'.

A wide range of tools requiring hand-eye co-ordination allow children to demonstrate good levels of skill and control, for instance when dribbling glue across a cardboard box to make a pattern. Children negotiate space well, both indoors and outdoors. They can judge their body space accurately when sitting close together on the mat at circle time and they can adjust speed and change direction to avoid each other when riding around the outdoor area on wheeled toys. Children have access to an excellent range of craft and sensory resources which encourage children's creativity and self-expression. Children eagerly take part in favourite songs and enjoy learning how sounds can be changed when they inventively turn junk modelling tubes into trumpets to make elephant noises.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed into the playgroup and play a full part in the daily sessions. Staff recognise each child as an individual and work closely with parents to meet their needs. Those with specific needs are very well supported, which ensures they are able to take part in all aspects of the group. Children feel a real sense of belonging in the group because name cards are used for registration and snack time and many photo displays show children playing in the environment. This allows children to see themselves reflected in the group and consequently they feel valued and experience a positive sense of self.

A very good range of toys and resources promote a positive view of the wider world and contribute to increasing children's awareness of diversity. Effective systems are in place to support any children who have English as an additional language. Children are learning responsible behaviour because staff consistently apply positive behaviour management strategies. Staff constantly give children meaningful praise so that they seek attention for being kind and helpful. These strategies have a very positive effect on the children and as a result they are very mature in their behaviour

and in their use of good manners. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are welcomed into the setting by a very informative entrance area, with a wide variety of information regarding the provision and the Foundation Stage displayed. Detailed information regarding the service is provided for parents in the form of a welcome pack and regular newsletters keep them up to date with developments. Staff keep parents informed about their child's time in the setting because 'All about me' books record their achievements in photos, examples of work and observational comments. Parents are encouraged to take the records home and add any comments about children's learning. Parents are provided with clear and concise 'Learning through play at home' information. This effective sharing of information encourages parents to become involved in their child's learning, which contributes to children's development and well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by staff who are suitably qualified and vetted. The group are very pro-active in identifying areas for development and write and implement a yearly action plan for the playgroup. A high level of commitment to training and continual development is maintained and the group have already identified their need to attend training on planning for and providing activities for the under threes. As a result, the staff are always moving forward in current childcare practice and this has a positive impact on the care, learning and play provided for the children.

The playgroup are well-organised and have very good links with the school. Children moving up into the reception class have regular visits to settle them in and children, who have recently moved up, are encouraged by the playgroup and allowed by the school to make regular visits to the playgroup. This helps to ease the transition process and promotes their emotional well-being.

The leadership and management of the playgroup is good. The group have a strong willingness to continually improve and implement any advice from the local authority. Although this assists them in monitoring how well the setting provides nursery education, there is no appraisal system in place to monitor the effectiveness of the staff in delivering the nursery education curriculum. A thorough induction process is in place and staff meetings allow all staff to be actively involved in the planning of activities. This means that all staff are aware of the learning intentions of the activities. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the playgroup was recommended to make improvements to the induction procedures for new staff and the attendance register. These have been satisfactorily addressed and the induction procedure is now thorough in ensuring that all new staff members are fully aware of all the group's policies and procedures. The attendance register has been developed to include any times of

arrival and departure which differ from the usual opening times. These improvements have contributed to the already good organisation of the group and have a positive effect on the continuity of care for the children.

At the last nursery education inspection the playgroup was asked to ensure that equipment for information technology is more frequently available for younger children. The playgroup have reviewed their long term planning and made improvements which now make sure that the computer is always available for any child who is in receipt of nursery education funding. This means that all children now have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- review the planning for the under threes, for example by using the Birth to three matters framework, to be more effective in planning for younger children's next steps in their play and learning and to inform your observations of their developmental progress
- devise and implement an appraisal system to monitor the effectiveness of the 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):

- review the records of children's progress to clearly identify their next steps in learning and use the information to effectively inform the planning for individual children's future learning.

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