



Sidford Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 106029 |
| Inspection date | 16 November 2005 |
| Inspector | Anne Legge |
| Setting Address | Sidford Social Hall, Byes Lane, Sidford, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 9QX |
| Telephone number | |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Sidford 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?

Sidford Playgroup was established in 1971. The group meets each weekday during term time, from 09.30 to 12.00, at Sidford Social Hall. There is also a lunch club on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, from 12.00 until 13.15.

Sidford is a village located on the northern edge of the coastal town of Sidmouth, in East Devon. The playgroup meets in the village hall, using the main room, kitchen and toilet facilities and an outdoor play area. The group is registered for a maximum

of 26 children, aged from 2 to 5 years, and accepts children in the term before they are 3 years old. There are currently 26 children on roll, including 19 funded 3- and 4-year olds. The playgroup welcomes children with special needs.

There are four staff, three of whom have appropriate child care qualifications, and the fourth is working towards a relevant qualification. Parents are asked to assist on a voluntary rota. The playgroup receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy many opportunities to be physically active, and to develop their fitness and skills. Staff make very good use of the field and park opposite the playgroup's premises. They take children for walks, encourage them to run freely and use the large equipment, to climb, swing or balance. Children also engage in obstacle courses, play parachute games, or develop their ball control skills. They use their own outdoor play area to push, pedal or scoot, using a good variety of wheeled toys. They regularly play on a large climbing frame and slide in the hall, ensuring that they have plenty of exercise, even in poor weather.

Children learn about healthy eating, as they eat nutritious snacks, such as fruit and vegetables, and try a variety of different foods, which promote good health. Their special dietary needs are known and met, and they have plenty of fluids, as water is constantly available for them to serve themselves. Children receive good care when they are unwell or injured. All staff have current first aid qualifications, and there are effective procedures for recording accidents and medication administered. This information is shared appropriately with parents, to ensure that children's care is consistent, and the required consents are in place. Children are effectively protected from infection, due to the staff's good procedures for excluding sick children, and for ensuring that the premises are clean. Children learn good hygiene routines, as they wash their hands before eating, and after using the toilet or going for walks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a very large hall, where the ample space is used very effectively, to provide a good variety of play opportunities. They use different areas of the hall for physical play, role play, quiet activities, such as sharing books, table-top activities, messy tasks, or floor play, on soft mats. They move around safely, and enjoy the freedom which their premises offer. Children choose from a good variety of appropriate resources, which are clean and in good condition.

Children's safety is promoted well, as the staff have a good understanding of all safety issues. They risk assess the premises regularly, and carry out daily checks on equipment, such as the climbing frame. Children learn to be aware of potential danger, as they discuss safe ways of crossing the road, or why they must stay close

to staff when on outings. They are safe in emergencies, as evacuation procedures are practised regularly. They are well protected from abuse or neglect, as staff have a clear understanding of all child protection issues and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in a very good variety of planned activities, which are appropriate for their different stages of, and promote their development. Younger children settle quickly into the playgroup, and receive very good support from staff. All children are confident and busily engaged in interesting activities throughout sessions. They enjoy plenty of free play, and respond well to adult-led activities, in large or small groups, such as story-time or bubble painting. Children access a wide range of resources, which are changed during each session. However, they do not always develop their independence, by choosing from a good selection of resources, such as different puzzles or small world toys, as this variety is not always available at any one time.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children's individual learning needs are effectively met, as staff use their understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, to interact skilfully with children and promote their development. They use questions and discussion successfully, to offer appropriate challenge or support to each child, such as when helping them to collect leaves and identify trees. Children benefit from effective planning systems, which ensure that the whole curriculum is covered. All staff know the learning objectives of each activity, so they are able to maximise learning, throughout sessions. Staff observe children's achievements and use this information to plan for the next steps in their learning, although assessment records do not reflect the whole range of children's achievements.

Children make good progress in all areas of learning. They make excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world, as they explore a wide range of substances and processes, such as the effects of salt on ice, or objects which float or sink. They learn about the natural world through regular walks, to observe seasonal changes and compare different leaves. They develop a good understanding of numbers, as they count in a variety of daily routines, or compare groups of different sizes. However, this is not always extended in practical activities to regularly help children to match numerals to groups. They use mathematical language in their play, such as when balancing heavier and lighter objects, and they recognise, name and draw shapes, such as squares and triangles.

Children learn about letter sounds, as they discuss the sounds at the beginning of their name, or learn actions for each letter, but their understanding is not systematically developed, through a variety of daily activities. They write for a very good range of different purposes, such as writing letters for Postman Pat's sack. They enjoy stories and share books in the quiet area. Children develop their creativity in an excellent variety of art and craft activities, such as by completing observational drawings of sunflowers, drawing self-portraits or making collages of Postman Pat and his van. They draw and paint freely, and enjoy making bubble pictures or designing

cards for a friend. They explore sounds, as they use musical instruments, and they sing familiar songs, such as a song about tidying up.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave very well, as they respond to the warm and positive approach of staff. They know the clear routines of the playgroup and willingly help to implement them, such as by following signals to tidy up, or swap toys when outside. They learn to understand the consequences of their actions, as staff explain clearly why they should, for example play safely with large equipment, and they enjoy copious praise for their efforts.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They learn to share toys and take turns with resources, such as wheeled toys or glue sticks. They become aware of the needs of others, as they are encouraged, for example to consider the person in front of them, on the slide. They experience wonder, when looking at autumn colours or completing a bubble print. Children's individual needs are very well met, as staff respond to family situations, and give support when needed. They learn about cultural differences, as they celebrate different festivals and use resources, such as dolls and books, which reflect diversity. There are effective systems to monitor and support children with special needs.

Partnership with parents is good. Children's care is consistent, as parents receive good information about all policies and procedures, including the Foundation Stage curriculum, when their child joins the group. There are very effective systems for sharing information about topics in newsletters, and about daily activities, as staff display a summary sheet at the end of each session. Parents also receive information about children's progress, in the form of half-termly reports in home books, to which they add their own comments. However, they do not regularly access their child's records, showing details of progress towards the early learning goals, this limits their ability to fully support their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by competent and well-qualified staff, who are committed to developing their skills through further training. They work very effectively as a team, and have successfully maintained good standards of care and education for children during a difficult time, when there has been no permanent manager. The committee is very active in supporting staff, and all roles are clear. Children benefit from good organisation of time, excellent use of space, and mainly good provision of resources. Although the premises are shared, and all resources are packed away at the ends of sessions, staff work hard to create an attractive environment for children, using good displays and exciting resources. Children's welfare is underpinned by almost comprehensive documentation, as committee members regularly review and update policies and procedures. One document lacks sufficient detail.

Leadership and management are good. There are effective systems to monitor the quality of nursery education, such as evaluations of activities and topics, and regular staff appraisals, to identify training needs. Staff are aware of areas for development in their practice, and committed to constant improvement. Children's learning is well supported by effective systems for planning, and a good organisational structure. The playgroup meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the playgroup has improved children's care and safety in emergencies, by implementing regular practises of evacuation procedures, and systems to request consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. They have improved the consistency of children's care, by developing systems for exchanging information with parents, including reporting regularly on progress, in home record books. However, parents' ability to support their child's learning is still not fully promoted, as they do not regularly see their child's detailed progress records. Children now benefit from consistent and very positive behaviour management, and systems are in place, to share significant incidents with parents.

Children's progress is now successfully promoted, due to the staff's very good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and their effective systems for planning appropriate activities, and ensuring that children have access to the whole curriculum. Assessment records now effectively track children's progress towards the early learning goals, except for the most able children, whose achievements are not yet fully recorded. Staff use assessment information to plan activities, which meet all children's individual learning needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2004.

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):

- review daily routines and the organisation of resources, to provide further opportunities for children to make choices and develop their independence
- update registers, to include the exact times of attendance of children, staff and visitors.

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 systems for recording children's progress towards the early learning goals, to include the achievements of the most able children. Use this information to regularly inform parents about progress and the next steps for learning, so that they can fully support their child's development
- extend opportunities for children to develop their understanding of numerals and letter sounds, through daily routines and practical activities.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk