



Saxon Green Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	142904
Inspection date	12 December 2005
Inspector	Mary Daniel

Setting Address	St Francis Church Hall, Saxon Green, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 4JA
Telephone number	07751048275 opening
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Registered person	Saxon Green 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?

Saxon Green Playgroup was established in 1973 and operates from St Francis Church Hall, which is situated in Bridgewater. Children have use of the main hall, adjoining side room and associated facilities. There is a paved outdoor play area at the side of the hall.

The playgroup is registered to care for a maximum of 26 children aged from 2 to 5 years at any one time. The group is open, term-time only on Mondays, Thursdays

and Fridays from 09:15 - 11:45 and 12:15 - 14:45, and on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 09:15 - 11:45. There are currently 47 children on roll, of whom 30 are in receipt of Government funding for nursery education. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and those who have English as a second language. Children attending live in the local community or surrounding areas.

This parent committee run playgroup employ four members of staff, all of whom are qualified in early years education or are currently undertaking relevant training. The group receive support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are encouraged well in clear hygiene routines. For example, they wash their hands regularly, using liquid soap and paper towels. They can easily reach tissues to blow their noses. As a result, procedures in place help to protect children from the spread of infection. Children's health is satisfactorily monitored through the use of relevant medical records and group policies. Children's individual dietary needs are recorded and parents are kept informed of any foods offered in activities. This contributes to maintaining consistency in children's care.

Children's understanding of healthy practices is promoted well as they meet the dentist and learn how to keep their teeth clean. They talk about the different foods brought in for the Harvest service and sometimes have tasting sessions of unusual fruits. This allows children to develop some understanding of nourishing foods. However, their awareness of healthy eating is not well promoted at snack times, when they are generally provided with only a drink and biscuit. Children have some opportunities to use up their energy as they play musical dancing games and join in with the action songs. Most children enjoy moving to the 'Heads and shoulders' song. More use is being made of the outside play area, which allows children further chances of fresh air opportunities, although physical play activities overall are limited.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a bright and inviting play environment. Space is used appropriately overall to enable children to move around confidently. More use is being made of the garden area to give children different outdoor play opportunities. For example, they have fun with the sand and water play outside. They play with a range of toys and equipment, which overall shows as in reasonable condition. Children build their models with small and chunky bricks. They enjoy playing in the well set out home corner and use child sized utensils. As a result, children begin to handle and use toys appropriately. Staff put out a range of exciting toys and activities. However, children are not able to independently access further resources, and so are not sufficiently encouraged in making clear choices in their play.

Children's safety is supported through use of a weekly risk assessment. Their security is monitored well and a record of visitors is maintained. Children develop some awareness of dangers as they meet the local fire fighters. Consequently, they begin to develop some understanding of keeping themselves safe. Staff continue to attend child protection training and their adequate knowledge of relevant issues helps to keep children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children mix happily with their peers and begin to form relationships. For example, they play together in the home corner and feed and bath their 'babies'. Another child mixes some 'ingredients' to make their dinner. They explore the activities provided with interest, but cannot easily extend or initiate their own ideas in play as other resources are stored elsewhere. Children respond well to staff and chat easily with them about their family life. This helps them to settle and become confident within the setting

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most children play confidently together and begin to develop their concentration skills. For example, a child becomes absorbed in completing his puzzle. Children join in with community events and make their own floats for the local carnival. Some children begin to develop independence skills as they change into their gym kits in readiness for starting 'big school'. However, but they do not pour their own drinks at snack time. Most children show interest in a story and they willingly join in with the repeated refrains. They enjoy stamping their feet to imitate the giants loud footsteps. This encourages their listening and communication skills appropriately. Some children begin to develop control with mark making tools and a child proudly shows a picture of her 'Daddy'. However, children cannot always easily access pens and paper to support their ideas in other areas of play, such as making lists in the home corner. Children play with magnetic letters on a board but have few chances to link sounds with letters or become familiar with simple written words within their play environment. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to promote children's early reading skills within their play.

Children start to use numbers for a purpose as they weigh the different sized teddy bears, or as they use the cash register in the home corner. They enjoy their counting songs and rhymes, but have limited chances overall to solve simple practical number problems within their play. Children have fun making their paper windmills and hold them up into the air to see the wind blow the sails round. They become aware of their environment on local walks to collect leaves. Children build and construct as they fit the train track together. They also play on the computer. However, they cannot access many other technological resources so easily, which restricts their interest in how and why things work. Most children manage to easily climb up and down the steps to the slide and some develop control with their ride on toys. However, the physical play opportunities provided overall do not provide sufficient challenge for all children. Consequently, they are not fully supported in developing their gross motor skills through regular exercise. Children begin to use their imagination as they make their own indoor picnic. They have fun exploring the 'gloop' mixture and make masks

using glitter and feathers. This gives children some chances to discover different textures. Children go willingly to make their Christmas candle holders or to draw and paint. However, some activities are not challenging enough for all children and they cannot easily access a wide range of further materials to help develop their own ideas in creativity.

Staff make use of the Foundation Stage curriculum when planning activities and this helps in supporting children's interests. They make observations of children's progress and discuss this at their weekly meetings. However, the assessment records used are not clearly evidencing children's individual achievements and are not regularly completed. Consequently, planned activities are not always sufficiently based on children's existing skills and abilities. Planning relates to the six areas of learning. However, it does not show how activities can be modified or extended to support children's individual stages of development. As a consequence, children are not being consistently helped to progress to the next stage in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are encouraged appropriately to behave well. They benefit from the clear explanations given. For example, they are kindly asked not to walk down the slide in case they hurt themselves. As a result, children begin to develop some awareness of what is right and wrong. Children are reassured by the friendly relationships that staff form with parents. This informal liaison promotes some consistency in children's welfare and contributes to them settling in easily.

Children's awareness of other ways of living is supported as they dress up in ethnic clothes and learn through their story books that men and women can work as fire fighters. However, there are limited positive images of diversity reflected within the overall play areas. Consequently, children's understanding of the differences within their world is not fully promoted. Overall, children's particular needs are respected and supported appropriately. Staff use a simple sign language with all children, which supports integration well. Children are valued and staff work well with parents and other involved agencies to maintain continuity in care.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are kept informed of particular issues relating to the nursery education and the weekly activity planning sheet is displayed. Written information is available on the six areas of learning. This helps parents in supporting their child's interests. Parents have some opportunities to meet with staff to discuss their child's developmental progress. However, the assessment records used do not always clearly evidence their child's achievements. As a result, parents are not fully supported in contributing to their child's progress. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They visit the adjoining church for different services and act out their own nativity play. They are encouraged to be kind and to share. Consequently, they develop some awareness of giving consideration to others.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the established daily procedures. For example, they know at that they sit in small groups with their key worker snack time. This helps them to feel at ease within the group. Most required records are in order and are stored securely. Overall, the session runs smoothly, although children are not always grouped appropriately for some large group activities. For example, some younger children become restless during the singing and dancing times. This means they are not fully supported in participating in all activities.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff attend ongoing training and several have completed a simple sign language course. They are pro-active in seeking support from relevant agencies, which helps to improve the provision offered. For example, in making more use of the outside play area. Staff work well as a team and meet weekly to plan interesting activities for the children. They make some use of the children's developmental assessments, but these are not always sufficiently completed. This means that planned activities are not fully based on children's specific needs or existing abilities. Staff form some action plans to review issues arising. However, these do not cover all aspects of the provision and there is no clear system in place to monitor all areas identified for improvement. Consequently, some issues are not given sufficient consideration, which impacts on the groups aims for continual improvement for the setting.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were set recommendations relating to safety, behaviour management and hygiene practices. A weekly assessment of identified areas of risk is now completed, which means children's safety is more effectively monitored. Children now have use of appropriate hand washing facilities and a changing mat and potties are available for the younger children's needs. This gives some help in protecting children from the spread of infection. Some staff have attended behaviour management training and the group's behaviour policy has been reviewed and updated. Staff work together consistently in their approach to behaviour issues and give children clear explanations as to what is unacceptable behaviour. As a result, children begin to develop some understanding of right and wrong.

The key issues set at the last inspection of nursery education relate to children's involvement with stories, numbers and technological resources, developing the systems used for monitoring the provision, and making more use of their assessment records. Children now have opportunities to contribute to group stories and enjoy the visits from the local librarian who tells them a story. This encourages their interest in books, although some other group story sessions are not so well organised. Children's number awareness is supported as they sing their counting songs such as 'Five currant buns'. They help to count out the cups at snack time. This helps them become familiar with using numbers. Children make use of a computer and some can

operate a simple program. They use a magnetic stick to follow a maze pattern. This encourages their interest in technology, but there are few other relevant resources that they can reach easily to support their own ideas in play. Staff are making more use of assessments in the planning of activities and have organised some opportunities for parents to share these records. However, children's achievements are not always clearly evidenced and therefore are not fully supporting staff in providing suitably challenging activities for all children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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):

- improve upon the organisation of toys and resources so children can extend the activities on offer themselves and make their own choices of materials and tools for their play
- improve the opportunities offered to children to encourage them further in their awareness of healthy eating
- develop clear systems for reviewing and monitoring the overall provision offered, to support the groups aims for continual improvement.

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 the use of the assessment system to clearly evidence children's individual achievements and support the planning of challenging activities, which can be modified or extended to meet children's particular

developmental needs

- provide further opportunities for children to develop their gross motor developmental skills, and to use their free expression within creative activities
- provide further opportunities for parents to share in their children's achievements and to contribute to their developmental progress.

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