



Thorpe on the Hill Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253575
Inspection date	15 November 2005
Inspector	Christine Hands
Setting Address	The Portacabin, Thorpe on the Hill CE School, School Lane, Thorpe on the Hill, Lincoln, Lincs, LN6 9BN
Telephone number	07949 371607
E-mail	
Registered person	Thorpe on the Hill 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 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?

Thorpe On The Hill Playgroup opened in 1992. It is a committee-run provision and operates from a small porta-cabin in the grounds of the St Michaels Church of England School. This is in the village of Thorpe on the Hill which is on the southern outskirts of Lincoln. The group serves the local community and surrounding rural areas.

There are currently 27 children from two-and-a-half to five years on roll. This includes

17 funded 3-year-old children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are no children currently attending who have special needs or who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens each weekday morning and also on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons during school term time. Sessions are from 09:00 until 11:45 and 12:30 until 15:00.

Five part-time staff work with the children. Half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting has support from a curriculum adviser from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and child friendly environment where a great deal of consideration and thought is given to both keeping warm in winter and cool in summer through the provision of heaters and an air conditioning unit. Their health is well promoted as there are effective hygiene procedures in place, such as washing hands before snacks and after using the toilet. The children's dietary needs are met as the pre-school discusses individual requirements with parents and keeps a record of these, ensuring that any special diets are catered for. Children are offered a good range of healthy snacks which include fresh fruit, crudities and toast and although sweet biscuits are also given they are reminded that these are not healthy options so should only be eaten occasionally. This sometimes promotes discussion as to which foods are healthy and which are not. Their immediate health is promoted through the carefully considered policies and procedures which include information for parents about infectious or contagious illnesses. All staff have undertaken first aid training and obtained written permission from parents with regard to obtaining emergency treatment or advice ensuring that the needs of the children are met in the case of illness or accident.

Children participate in a wide range of physical activities, which contribute to the promotion of their good health. They take part in outdoor exercise on a daily basis using climbing and balancing apparatus as well as making use of a range of toys and equipment such as bikes, sit and rides, balls and hoops. All children are able to join in at their own level of ability because the staff provide good levels of support and encouragement.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and well-maintained environment. Potential

hazards are identified and minimised both indoors and during outdoor activities to help keep children safe. The policies, procedures and risk assessments are in place and staff understand these well, however, because emergency evacuation procedures are rarely practised not all children are familiar with the routine which could potentially pose a risk. Children begin to take responsibility for their own and others' safety as they tidy away toys from the floor to ensure that there is some free space for children to move around in safety. They are also beginning to learn about keeping themselves safe as staff talk about, and provide activities regarding issues such as road safety and the use of apparatus.

Children choose from a variety of good quality toys and play materials, some of which are easily accessible. Because of the limited space available there are some toys and resources that have to be reached by a member of staff who do so willingly when asked. Children know and understand the need for this and confidently ask for what they want. Staff monitor the resources to ensure they remain safe and suitable for children's use. Children's welfare is promoted as staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures as well as having the required documentation in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup and are eager to participate in all activities. Resources are well presented and of good quality. They are able to freely access activities and some resources, although because of lack of space they have to ask staff for others. Children's thinking skills are developing well as staff use good questioning techniques. They enjoy listening to stories and joining in with singing. Children participate in a good range of activities, which helps to promote their development in all areas.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a thorough understanding of the Foundation Stage enabling children to make good progress in all areas. Children are eager to learn and enjoy participating in a wide range of activities, which are both adult-led and child-initiated. Activities are well thought out and displayed well, making them appealing and creating an interesting environment where children learn and develop. Short, medium and long term plans are in place to ensure all areas of the curriculum are covered. However, planning contains limited information concerning how children will be sufficiently challenged to move them on to the next stages of their development. Assessments and observations are used to chart children's progress and to identify possible gaps in their learning and development, however, current systems are not fully effective to ensure all of children's achievements are correctly identified and recorded appropriately, nor are children's abilities and knowledge recorded when they first start at the group. Because this is a small group staff are soon able to assess the needs and abilities of the children and plan activities accordingly.

Children are settled and confident in the setting. They concentrate well and confidently speak up in group activities and are beginning to show an awareness of

the needs of others as they wait patiently for their turn when lining up outside or for turns on the computer. Children independently visit the toilet and are aware of the hygiene routines needed. They are developing good self care skills as they attempt to put their own coats and aprons on. Children's behaviour is generally good. Their understanding of right from wrong is developing well as staff are clear in their explanations making them aware of the reasons why certain behaviour is not acceptable. Children sit and listen intently to stories and show a good understanding of how books work as they confidently start at the front of the book and work towards the back. Children are also learning new words, for example, staff talk to the children about the author being the person who writes the book and involve them in discussions. Staff are aware that telling a story is very different from reading one and acknowledge that children respond in a different manner by focusing more on the story teller and listening more intently to what is being said.

All children recognise their name in print and most are able to write their own names although some of the younger children require support. They see a wide range of print displayed around the room and are becoming aware that print carries meaning. Children have access to writing materials at all times enabling them to practise their early writing skills.

Children's understanding of number is well supported by staff during the daily routine. They confidently count past ten and show an understanding of the value of numbers. Through activities such as baking they are beginning to understand how to weigh ingredients and the terminology more and less. Children investigate and explore a good range of resources, helping to promote their understanding of texture and how things change, for example what it looks like both before and after a cake is cooked. They help to care for the goldfish within the setting, which along with growing cress and learning about different life cycles are enabling them to gain a greater understanding of caring for living things as well as how things grow. They confidently use and access a good range of Information Technology equipment and are becoming skilled at using the computer. Children's design and making skills are promoted well during planned activities when they access a good range of materials, however because they are not able to freely access these there is a lack of spontaneity. Children like joining in with singing activities and circle games and confidently request their favourites. They enjoy role playing with their peers and use their imagination well during activities. Children confidently use a range of large and small equipment correctly, which helps to ensure their physical skills are developing well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have a good range of resources that enable them to learn about the wider world and diversity and are developing a positive understanding of individuality and difference through general play and regular exposure to resources that promote positive images.

Children feel valued and respected because staff ensure that they are aware of their

individual needs. These are well catered for through close liaison with parents. Their development is carefully monitored to ensure that these needs are realistically met. Parents are kept well informed about their child on a daily basis and records are current and comprehensively maintained. Children benefit greatly from their first hand experience of positive partnership between the staff and their parents. Good levels of support are in place for children who have special educational needs. The staff ensure through ongoing training that they can provide for all children's needs to a high standard.

The quality of the setting's partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are given good quality information about the setting and receive regular newsletters as well as information displayed in the entrance hall. This enables them to gain a greater understanding of what their child does at the playgroup and how they can develop this further at home. Information is exchanged with parents on a daily basis to ensure staff are aware of any changes that may affect a child's behaviour. The children's daily routine is well balanced and allows time for snacks, quiet activities and active play. Their social skills are developing and relationships forming through the opportunities provided for meeting other children and adults. Children play well together and are learning about sharing and turn-taking. Their behaviour is very good and staff continually use praise and encouragement to enable children to feel confident and gain a feeling of self-worth. Children have consistent boundaries and are always given clear explanations, enabling them to think about their behaviour and start to take responsibility for themselves. They respond very well to staff, and the positive approach and excellent staff role-modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's needs are met well in a playgroup that is well organised to promote their safety and is run by qualified and experienced staff. Space and resources are organised effectively within the confines of the building creating an environment where children can self-select some of the activities. They confidently ask for those that they are unable to reach. Leadership and management of the setting is good. The manager has a clear understanding of her role and responsibilities and is currently working with the curriculum and development advisors to make further improvements to the provision. Effective recruitment, vetting and appraisal systems are in place, which helps to ensure children's needs are met and they receive continuity of care. Children receive a good standard of care because staff communicate and work well together as a team. They further benefit from staff developing their knowledge and keeping up to date with current child care practices through attending relevant training courses. Children's needs are effectively met because records are completed appropriately and stored with regard to confidentiality. Policies and procedures are informative and implemented well, which ensures children's well-being is maintained. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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 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):

- ensure that evacuation procedures are practised on a regular basis to enable all children to become familiar with the routine

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):

- enable children to have free access to resources to promote spontaneity and freedom of expression in their design and craft activities
- further develop the recording of assessments of children's learning through observation in order to improve the effectiveness of evidence and evaluative judgements in supporting individual children's progression.

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