



Carleton Rode Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254007
Inspection date	16 March 2006
Inspector	Jane Louise Tallent
Setting Address	Jubilee Hall, Mill Road, CARLETON RODE, Norfolk, NR16
Telephone number	01953 788 916
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Registered person	Carleton Rode 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?

The playgroup registered more than 20 years ago. It operates from the village hall in Carleton Rode which is in Norfolk. Children have access to a main hall, entrance lobby and toilets. There is also a community play area to the rear of the hall that children use. The playgroup is run by a voluntary management committee.

Children who attend come mostly from Carleton Rode and surrounding areas. A maximum of 26 children between the ages of 2 and 5-years-old attend at any one

time. There are currently 12 children on roll, 6 of whom are funded 3-year-olds. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. The playgroup opens from 10:00 to 12:30 on Thursdays and Fridays during term times.

There are five staff who regularly work with the children. They are assisted by parent helpers. The manager and two other staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Other staff are unqualified and undertake associated childcare courses, as they become available.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in an environment that is maintained to a satisfactory level with clean play surfaces, toys and equipment. The children have begun to share some responsibility for their own personal hygiene as they independently wash their hands after using the toilets and before they eat their snacks.

Children decide when to have their snacks and sit together at clean tables. Most children talk to their friends while they eat and drink which encourages their social development. They are provided with nutritious snacks of bananas and apples to promote their awareness of healthy eating before being offered a biscuit. All of the children pour their own milky drinks and have access to water throughout the session. Overall, the children's dietary needs are well prioritised by staff in this small rural setting, but sometimes staff overlook the need to make sure that information supplied by parents is kept on the premises for easy reference.

The children move around the play areas independently and they can choose to practise their co-ordination by throwing bean bags into a net, hitting balls with racquets or by kicking footballs indoors. This helps some children to gain an awareness of space as they move around but other children are not encouraged to take part in regular physical exercise and notice the changes in their bodies.

Overall children are safeguarded to a satisfactory level. There is a suitable policy for dealing with sickness, gaining parent's signatures when administering medication and for recording accidents. For children who feel unwell, or have accidents, there are three members of staff who are trained in first aid. These staff make sure that the first aid box is stocked so that if children do hurt themselves, their minor cuts and bumps are quickly dealt with.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to play safely, without exposure to most unnecessary risks, because staff routinely carry out assessments to identify potential hazards. They have access to a wide range of child-size resources and are learning how to use toys

and equipment safely. All of the children carefully use scissors but lack appropriate guidance when they use tools, such as hammers and nails, during wood-working activities. They help staff to tidy up toys which helps them to begin to share responsibility for other people's safety.

Children use child-size tables and chairs and have a suitable range of toys available to them which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development. These include paints, peat trays, books, construction toys, puzzles, and conkers to plant. There are also writing materials, crafts and imaginary play resources. These are stored on low units to enable children to access them safely.

Children are helped to know which parts of the building to use because there are effective barriers in place to deny them access to unregistered parts of the building and to make sure that they cannot leave unnoticed. The children join in with daily registration exercises so that everyone knows who is attending each session. They also take part in emergency evacuation drills to become familiar with the procedure.

Children are suitably protected because the staff have attended training and have up-to-date child protection publications and procedures in place to help them to understand their duty to prioritise children's well being. In this way the children's welfare is promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children of all ages play happily with each other and with adults. They all have free access to resources, such as construction toys, peat, crafts, woodwork and dressing-up clothes which enables them to use their senses and creative abilities. Exploration with natural and man-made materials help children to represent their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff team have differing levels of childcare experience and possess the relevant qualifications needed to work with pre-school children. The children are presented with many interesting challenges because staff apply their understanding of early years guidance, such as 'Birth to three matters' and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, to provide satisfactory quality care and education. Staff have begun to record their observations of children and acknowledge their achievements. They do not however use the stepping stones to extend activities and plan challenges for children in their physical development for example. Instead the children are presented with a variety of resources to practise on which means that their physical development is heavily reliant on free play activities. Staff have completed a self evaluation form to assist them to monitor their own effectiveness, see where they are successful and identify which aspects of their practice require improvement. Currently, however, the staff have low expectations for older and more able children which means that these children lack sufficient challenge to help them to make good progress in their learning.

However, children do show a sense of belonging as they arrive and greet staff on arrival. They settle well and are interested in their play as they select and carry out activities. Children are friendly and show consideration for others by sharing and taking turns. They speak to staff, share their experiences and most children listen well to stories. Some children are able to guess what happens next in the story. They are beginning to count but older children do not use their knowledge regularly to solve simple problems. The children are able to recognise different colours and shapes and have opportunities to demonstrate this when playing with bean bags and using craft materials. They have some opportunities to make marks and select books independently but the lack of attention given to additional aspects of early reading, writing and solving simple number problems means older and more able children are not often challenged to increase their understanding.

Children have good knowledge of their environment and staff recognise how to question children effectively to extend their language and help them to think for themselves. Some children use their imagination well in play and enjoy dressing as brides and dragons. They demonstrate good levels of hand and eye co-ordination but do not frequently go outside to play during the winter months. This weak planning of physical activities restricts the progress that children can make in their physical development.

The children's personal, social and emotional skills are well prioritised by staff. Consequently the children are confident to interact with other children and engage in conversation with staff. They interact well together and are beginning to understand how to co-operate in group situations by sharing toys and taking turns in group games.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are helped to develop a positive attitude towards others in the wider world as they use a variety of resources, such as dressing up clothes, books and dolls that reflect cultural diversity, roles and festivals. The children behave well and respond positively to instructions from staff.

Children with special needs can play happily alongside other children because staff have attended workshops and learned how to adapt the environment and make it accessible to everyone. They make good use of low tables and floor mats to create play surfaces to suit differing abilities.

Children behave well and show consideration for others. This helps their social development. Staff are good role-models for the children and as a consequence the children respond positively to their requests.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being fostered as staff build upon this positive approach.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory and contributes to children's well-being. Children's parents are made to feel welcome and most share

information with staff informally as they drop their children off and collect them. Staff discuss children's needs and interests on a regular basis while they are cared for by the group. They ensure that all parents know how their children have enjoyed the sessions but as yet there are no formal systems in place to inform parents of the progress that their children are making towards the early learning goals. Children benefit greatly from the fact that their parents are happy with their children's care and are able to involve themselves in some shared activities.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The children are able to take part in many interesting activities because the staff and their management committee are dedicated to helping children to learn. Staff are qualified and have suitable experience of child development and all legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place. Committee members have devised a suitable recruitment policy to make sure that all staff who work with children in the group are suitable to do so although they were slow to notify Ofsted of recent staff changes. The staff have begun to implement a self evaluation system to reflect their current strengths and weaknesses. From this they can begin to monitor and evaluate aspects of their practice in order to improve care for children.

Staff identify children's interests in their weekly plans to help them to learn. Recording systems are in place for staff to use to collate their observations of children's achievements. However these have not yet been developed sufficiently well to be evaluative, so that they can be used to identify the next stages of children's learning when planning takes place.

Staff and committee members maintain comprehensive records and policy documents to reflect practice within the group, keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. However they occasionally forget to bring necessary records to the premises for inspection and easy reference in emergencies. The children are able to benefit from consistent care as staff read the policies and procedures as an effective part of the induction process. They give valuable insight into the group's aims and objectives for the children.

Overall, the needs of the range of children who attend are being met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The group were previously asked to develop an action plan detailing how at least half of all childcare staff will hold a level two qualification in childcare. Since then the group have achieved their aim and three staff hold suitable childcare qualifications. Consequently the children are able to enjoy a range of activities that are appropriate to their stages of development.

They also needed to conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying actions to be taken to minimize identified risks. Children's safety is improved in most areas

because routine risk assessments take place to identify and eliminate hazards. However these have not yet been extended to include hazards relating to wood-working activities where children are able to use tools and handle sharp materials.

They needed to ensure children have access to fresh drinking water at all times. This issue has been addressed because the staff provide beakers and a water jug on a tray on top of the piano in the main play room. Children are reminded at registration time that they can ask for a drink whenever they want one and as a consequence all children are able to quench their thirst appropriately.

Also to ensure the method of recording children's accidents maintains confidentiality. A new accident book is in use which records one accident on a page to maintain confidentiality.

Additionally to review induction procedures for new staff and consider introducing staff appraisals. This has not yet been fully implemented to enable children to benefit from the changes.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 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):

- make sure that the recruitment policy is rigorous enough to cover emergencies so that Ofsted is kept informed of changed circumstances and staff checks are put in place

- improve risk assessments to make sure that children can use wood-work tools safely
- ensure that children's records are always available on the premises where children are present.

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):

- create challenges for children to increase their early number skills by paying attention to additional aspects of solving simple number problems which increase more able children's understanding.
- increase the number of planned and spontaneous opportunities for children to express themselves through movement and become aware of changes in their bodies when they take part in physical activities inside and out, as part of their physical development
- implement changes to the current system for recording observations of children to include assessments that can be used in planning to create challenges for children and help them to move onto their next stages of learning. These should be shared with parents to keep them informed of their child's learning.

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