



Pulham's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254236
Inspection date	21 February 2006
Inspector	Julie Denise Edmonds
Setting Address	Pulham Market Memorial Hall, The Green, Pulham Market, Norfolk, IP21 4SU
Telephone number	07899 886085
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Registered person	Pulham'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?

Pulham's Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee and operates from Pulham Market Memorial Hall, using the main hall and a smaller room. A maximum of 24 children aged between two and five years may attend the facility at any one time. The playgroup meets Tuesday to Friday from 09.30 to 12.00 noon during term time only. Toilet and washing facilities are accessible via the lobby. There is no outdoor play area.

There are currently 24 children on roll. Of these 19 children receive funding for nursery education. The children come from the local rural community and surrounding villages. They attend for a variety of sessions. The group is willing to support children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The group employs four staff. The supervisor and two further staff are working towards appropriate NVQ qualifications. The group receives support from local early years specialists.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well promoted with the group following appropriate routines, helping to prevent the spread of infection. This includes keeping areas where food is prepared and served clean. Children are learning to follow appropriate simple good health and hygiene practices, such as washing their hands before snack time.

Food offered provides children with a nutritious snack, promoting healthy living. Children enjoy varied food, such as fresh and dried fruit and crackers with a choice of spreads. This is offered at a snack bar, where they benefit from the social occasion. They learn about healthy food, with discussions taking place, including during play with pretend food. They have drinks during snack time to provide them with sufficient fluid intake. However, fresh drinking water is not available to children at all times, with no opportunity for them to pour their own drinks. This limits provision of regular drinks to provide for children's individual needs.

Children take part in daily physical activity indoors, with one area of the hall separated, providing them with space throughout each session to use their energy. Children use the climbing frame, learning to move in a range of ways, gaining awareness of their own and others' space and adapting speed. Their small motor skills are promoted through activities that require hand-eye co-ordination, such as using scissors, manipulative materials and spreading food on crackers. They rest and relax according to their own needs.

Health and dietary needs are met because the setting works in partnership with parents. Children's needs are known through use of documentation and talking with parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in warm, welcoming premises, with a colourful and attractive layout of resources and posters displayed. Their development and comfort is well promoted through good use of space enabling them to move safely around the premises, with accessible low level toys and equipment. They benefit from well

positioned child size tables and chairs, ample floor space to play and a cosy, comfortable book corner. Children use a range of good quality toys, activities and equipment suitable for the ages and stages of those attending.

Care is provided in an environment where risks are minimised. Children's safety is well promoted with a range of comprehensive risk assessments, including for specific events. Daily checks are made and effective measures are in place. An appropriate system for managing access to the premises includes monitoring the door at arrival and departure times, providing good security for the children. Periodic emergency escape plan practise improves the children's awareness and supports safe evacuation. Children are well supervised on outings reducing risks, with parent helpers attending to provide an appropriate adult: child ratio.

Children are well protected because staff understand their roles and responsibilities in child protection and are able to put local Area Child Protection Committee procedures into practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are comfortable and very well settled in the company of the staff. They are relaxed and communicate freely, responding well to the support given. They are forming good relationships with both adults and other children at the group. Adults talk to the children, using their names and enhancing their enjoyment and the fun atmosphere. This supports their growing confidence, self-esteem and positive attitude to learning. The children are confident and proud of what they do at the group. They are keen to share results with others and involve adults in their play, for example telling adults about their painting, providing them with "food" and "rescuing" them in pretend play. Children develop social skills as they play together and independence as they carry out individual tasks, such as putting on an apron ready for painting.

The variety of activities and play experiences and the emphasis on learning through play allows children to make choices and decisions about their play. They sustain interest at activities, such as pretend play with dinosaurs. They are fully occupied and move between the inviting range. They are enthusiastic and talk and listen while involved. Children enjoy play opportunities offered as part of a theme. The group are introducing the 'Birth to three matters' framework into their planning. Activities currently meet the needs of the younger children attending.

Nursery Education

Children show a sense of belonging to the group. They share books and listen to stories read by staff in the book area. Some children write for a purpose in role play, beginning to form letters. Use of labelling helps children to recognise that print carries meaning. Children count to five and beyond and are developing awareness of shape and size. The children show interest in modern technology as they use the telephone and cash register, pressing buttons to make things work. They are recognising the difference between real and pretend items, such as collected leaves and toy insects.

Children develop and practise their large and small movement physical skills with increasing control. They use their imaginations at the "vets", tending to sick animals and as workmen building an extension to the veterinary surgery. The children are introduced to different types of music and join in with rhyming songs at circle time. Children enjoy craft activities, particularly free painting at the easel and talk about their pictures.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children's interest and play is well supported, with adults consistently interested in what they say and do, working physically at the children's level and asking simple questions to improve their thinking skills. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals as staff use their knowledge to provide appropriate support. This is particularly apparent in the area of physical development. Observation, planning and assessment systems are in use and being developed. Plans cover all six areas of learning. Children's achievements are assessed in learning stories, with some useful comments about intended next steps to help individual children progress. For example, a child recognising bigger and smaller, with the next step to move onto heavier and lighter. However, use of this information to inform planning is limited, affecting the staff's ability to create challenges or provide specific support for individual children. Spontaneous opportunities for learning are not always recognised and developed, affecting complete cover of all aspects of early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children respond to the calm and polite role models, learning respect for each other because the staff are positive in their approach. They are aware of what is expected of them, behaving well and following routines, such as forming a line ready to enter the small room and taking turns. Children's positive behaviour is recognised and praised and most behaviour management methods are good. For example, excellent use of star charts encourage and reinforce. The full impact of most strategies used is taken into consideration. Children are encouraged to accept the needs of others, learning to have regard at the snack bar and during circle time. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children from all backgrounds and of all abilities are welcomed contributing to the group's commitment to inclusion. Staff know the individual children in their care well. Modern resources and planned activities help children to become aware of diversity and develop positive attitudes to others. For example, a range of activities linked to Chinese New Year. Children with special needs are welcome, although none currently attend. Staff have experience of promoting the welfare and development of children with special needs within the setting and working closely with other professionals. There is some opportunity for children to develop an understanding of their own community. Visits from people such as the fire officer and dental nurse are planned, but not currently taking place and there are occasional outings into the village.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from their

parents' regular involvement with the group, with parents helping at sessions and as members of the committee. The setting generally works well with parents to meet children's individual needs, with prior information gained on registration forms and verbally. There is sufficient information gained about what each child is able to do when they start attending. The group is developing how they work in partnership with parents with regard to the aims of the setting and nursery education. They provide useful information, with an attractive display about the six areas of learning. Some written information does not conform to the practice at the group. Parent helpers do not receive sufficient advance briefing about their role in supporting children, resulting in restrictions on children's learning through play. Settling children in is well supported with parents welcome to stay with their child. Although, the operation of the key worker system is inconsistent, with not all parents knowing who their child's key worker is. This affects ongoing communication between the setting and parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are welcomed into the setting by experienced staff, most of whom are working towards recognised appropriate qualifications. They work hard daily to create an attractive environment in the community hall, plan appropriate practical activities and make toys and resources accessible for children to self select and use. For example, with areas for messy play, free floor play and physical play, as well as to rest and tables where they are able to concentrate. Children benefit from well organised smooth running sessions from beginning to end, enabling productive use of available time.

Children are not left alone with anyone who is not vetted. All legally required documentation is in place and suitably maintained to promote the welfare and care of the children.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. A range of mostly accurate policies, procedures and information is in place to guide the staff and committee. The policies and procedures are reviewed and updated promptly to support the operation of the setting when practice is changed or omissions are identified. Regular committee and staff meetings provide a base for good working relationships within the setting and build committed teams. Individual responsibility motivates staff, such as developing different continuous provision activities. Most committee members having specific duties such as for risk assessment, supporting effective systems to complete and review tasks. Strengths and weaknesses are monitored with the support of the visiting link teacher and development plans are put into practice. Training workshops are attended in response to areas for improvement identified, such as regarding working in partnership with parents. Appraisals support monitoring staff performance, development and training to meet individual children's needs.

Overall the setting meets the needs of the children attending.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the group have improved their risk assessment as agreed. Outings, emergency and child protection procedures have been developed, also promoting children's safety. The complaints procedure and written parental consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment have been updated, supporting communication with parents and the regulator. Availability of fresh drinking water at all times has not increased sufficiently since the last inspection.

The provision for nursery education has improved. The organisation of the session and the use of time and resources provide ample occasions for children to become independent learners. There are opportunities for children to increase their problem solving skills and develop mathematical language. Although, these are not always recognised and developed by staff. Children are encouraged to show an interest in and ask how things work.

Complaints since the last inspection

Concerns were raised on 13th September 2005 regarding the provision's policy in relation to nappy changing, the lack of facilities for nappy changing and that drinks are not available to children. These concerns relate to National Standard 7: Health, 8: Food and drink, 10: Special needs and 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. On 22nd September 2005 Ofsted wrote to the provider and asked them to investigate and report back their findings. The provider reported that the provision's current policy is to accept children who are "dry", and admitted that they therefore have no appropriate changing facilities. However, they are reviewing their admissions policy and will be obtaining appropriate facilities. Parents will be informed in the meantime of the current situation. The group operate a snack bar system, and drinks are always available; parents will be reminded of this, and they will ensure parents are aware of all policy reviews. It was found at this inspection, that the group's admissions policy has changed. There are now facilities for nappy changing and children do not have to be "dry" before they attend. Ofsted is satisfied that the registered person has taken appropriate steps to address the concerns and the provider remains qualified for registration.

The complaint made to Ofsted is entered in the group's complaints record.

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):

- ensure fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- improve communication with parents, to provide them with accurate written information about current practice at the group and develop awareness of their role.

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):

- maximise use of daily opportunities to cover all aspects of early learning goals, particularly calculating in mathematics and designing and making skills in knowledge and understanding of the world
- make full use of observations and assessments to inform planning.

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