



Moonbeams Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221904
Inspection date	23 November 2005
Inspector	Emma Bright
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Registered person	Moonbeams 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?

Moonbeams Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the playgroup. It opened in 1997 and operates from a self-contained wing of the Meadows Community Centre in Cambridge. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open 3 days a week (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday) from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:30 to 15:00 during school term times and during some of the school holidays. All children have

access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 8 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports a small number of children with special educational needs and also supports children who have English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs 5 staff, of whom 4, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and 1 member of staff is currently working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is satisfactorily promoted and procedures are in place to ensure that children who are ill receive appropriate care. For example, parental consents for first aid or the administration of medication are obtained and sufficient staff hold current first aid certificates. Children are beginning to learn the importance of personal hygiene, such as washing their hands through regular, daily routines.

Children enjoy sufficient quantities of food to ensure their nutritional needs are met and they eat a range of snacks, which helps them to understand about making healthy choices. However, children are not offered fresh drinking water regularly during the session, which means they are not kept suitably hydrated to promote their good health. Children's individual dietary needs are noted and provided for, to take into account any special dietary requirements. This ensures that children are suitably nourished and content.

Children enjoy physical activity outdoors, such as rocking together on the see-saw and taking part in impromptu 'space hopper' races. They demonstrate good coordination skills as they pedal their tricycles, steering them with good control to avoid collision with others. This ensures that children benefit from physical activity to promote their good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a well maintained and welcoming environment. They move around safely and freely in the ample space provided under the constant supervision of the staff. Good security procedures are in place to restrict unauthorised access to the setting; staff greet each child and record the times of arrival. This promotes children's ongoing safety and well-being.

Children are beginning to learn about keeping safe, however staff do not always explain the dangers to them to help children to develop their understanding of

keeping themselves safe. Children use a good range of interesting resources that are appropriate for their age and stage of development, and these are checked regularly by the staff to ensure they are in good condition and are safe for children to use.

Children are protected and kept safe from harm as the staff have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures. The child protection policy is in place and shared with parents, but is in need of updating to ensure staff and children are kept safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

All children enjoy their time at the playgroup and most separate happily from their parents and carers, settling into their activities quickly on arrival. Children play happily together and are beginning to develop positive relationships with one another and this contributes to their sense of belonging. Children benefit from the warm interaction with the staff and they have formed good relationships with them, which helps to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Children are interested in the good range of activities and resources on offer, most of which they can access easily so that they can follow their own interests. However, young children do not yet benefit from a range of practical activities that are in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which means that positive outcomes for children under three are not fully promoted.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Practitioners have an understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a satisfactory range of activities and experiences that cover the areas of learning. Children's achievements are linked to the stepping stones, and assessment records show that children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. However, these records have not been sufficiently developed to include planning for the next step in their learning and do not yet take account of parents' contributions. This means that practitioners have an incomplete picture of some children's attainments, consequently some of the activities lack challenge for more able children.

Children's independence skills are developing and they tend to their personal needs, such as putting on aprons for messy play or pouring drinks for themselves at snack time. They concentrate and persevere in tasks that stimulate them and they demonstrate pride in their achievements. Children's behaviour is generally good and they are developing good negotiating skills as they learn to share and take turns, which encourages respect for others. Children confidently communicate with adults and each other, and they have formed good relationships with one another. However, insufficient attention is given to developing children's listening and speaking skills in regular group time so that they can share their experiences with each other.

Children develop their understanding of numbers, counting and calculation in a range of practical activities and during the daily routine. For example, they count how many cups are needed at snack time and talk about needing 'one more'. They use

mathematical language as they weigh objects and talk about which is heavy or light. Children are developing their design and construction skills, for example, they select from a range of materials to create their own models from 'junk'. They enjoy painting and mixing colours together, observing the results and drawing pictures to take home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are supported well in the transition between home and playgroup. This ensures that they feel secure and settle readily. Parents receive information about the setting so they know about activities and events, and they have daily opportunities to discuss their child with staff. Children's individual needs are met as information is gathered to ensure staff know about these needs and this contributes to children's well-being. Systems are in place to support children with special needs, which ensures they are supported appropriately and their needs are respected.

Children behave well and demonstrate an understanding of the rules for good behaviour with the support of staff. Staff generally use suitable strategies to manage children's behaviour, however they do not consistently use positive language to help children understand what is expected of them. Children access a range of suitable resources, which promote a positive view of the wider world and helps them to understand about their differences and similarities. However, some children with English as an additional language are not fully supported to help them feel included in the playgroup.

Children benefit from the good relationships between the staff and their parents, who discuss children's progress on a daily basis and this ensures children's individual needs continue to be met. Parents also have opportunities to present their views through the use of questionnaires. All policies and procedures are in place to share information with parents and carers and they receive good information, such as newsletters, which keeps them informed about the setting and activities.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive some information about the Foundation Stage. However, parents have few opportunities to contribute to their child's assessment record and the information gathered from parents does not link to the stepping stones in children's progress records, sharing what they know their child can do at home. This means that children do not benefit from the sharing of information that would enhance their learning and build on their existing knowledge and skills. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are happy and content as staff have developed warm and caring relationships with them. Sound recruitment procedures ensure that staff are vetted,

which ensures children are protected. Over half of the staff team hold appropriate early years qualifications and appraisals identify areas for professional development to further improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the needs of the children. However, staff's practice could be further monitored to ensure that they are effectively deployed so that children benefit from a well organised provision. All required documentation is in place and children's records are kept up to date, so that they receive appropriate care. This enables them to settle in well and become confident members of the group.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Managers are committed to improvement to ensure that all children have access to good quality learning experiences and have begun to identify areas for improvement. However, systems to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education are not yet in place, which means the impact of the teaching on the children's learning is not always effectively assessed. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, further resources have been purchased so that children have access to positive images of cultural diversity. However, staff have not yet attended training to help them support children with English as an additional language and this is reflected in the report. The organisation has not improved enough as staff are not always effectively deployed and this is also reflected in the report. Children now benefit from a range of activities that they can access easily, which means they independently develop their own play. Parents have some information about the Foundation Stage. However, as they do not yet contribute to their child's assessment record, parents and practitioners do not work together to achieve each child's full potential and this is reflected in the report.

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):

- ensure children are offered fresh drinking water regularly during the session
- update the child protection policy to include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff
- improve outcomes for children under three by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework

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 the system of assessment, to include gathering information from parents about their child's existing skills and linking their achievements to the appropriate framework, so that the details can be used to effectively identify progress and help staff to plan activities that build on what children already know and can do (also applies to care)
- implement systems to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education to ensure that staff are effectively deployed and children have access to good quality learning experiences.

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