



## Northway Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101573
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 January 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Angela Cole
<b>Setting Address</b>	Playgroup Building, Northway Infants School, Virginia Road, Tewkesbury, Glos, GL20 8PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01684 273750
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Northway Pre-School Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Northway Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1973 as a charity that is run by a voluntary committee. The group meets in its own large, open-plan building sited in the grounds of Northway Infants School on the outskirts of Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire. The playgroup building has an entrance hall, two main play areas, toilets and kitchen. The group also has the use of the school hall, blue room, playground and other outside areas. Most children live nearby in this expanding

suburb of Tewkesbury. A maximum of 26 children aged from 2 years to under 5 years may attend the playgroup at any one time. Children aged from 2 years 9 months to 5 years are accepted. Younger children may attend at the discretion of the management and staff. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 and 13.00 to 15.00, except for Monday morning and Thursday afternoon. Some sessions are for older, pre-school children only. Most pre-schoolers attend 2 or 3 sessions per week and stay for lunch later in the year.

There are currently 43 children from 2 years to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 37 children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with special educational needs. No children speak English as an additional language.

There are four members of staff working with the children. Of these, three have early years qualifications and are working towards further qualification. Rota parents provide additional help. Support is received from the infant school staff and advisors from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from their care in the clean, well-maintained setting. They learn good hygiene practices that include regular hand washing, particularly before eating. All arrangements for first aid and administering medication meet requirements and foster the continuity of children's care between the home and the group. Staff always act in the children's best interests if they become ill and work with parents to reduce the spread of infection.

Children access drinking water throughout the session, and healthy milk and water are available at snack times. Children's dietary needs are effectively met through savoury snacks that are varied, for example, with toast or fruit. Parents are well encouraged to provide nutritious lunch foods. Children are involved in stories, songs and cooking that sometimes extend their understanding of healthy eating.

Children have good opportunities for exercise and fresh air. They gain confidence and develop good co-ordination as they navigate the climbing and balancing equipment in the 'trim trail'. They use the whole of the space in the playground to control a wide variety of wheeled toys. Children develop a positive attitude to movement as they regularly respond to music in the school hall and playroom.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in the secure premises. They are safe as the adults show excellent vigilance indoors, outdoors and on outings. Staff check the premises daily

and reduce any hazards to a minimum so children may play freely. Children effectively learn to keep themselves safe, for example, as staff regularly remind them to walk indoors and give them meaningful explanations of safe practice.

The children use high-quality toys and equipment and these are checked before each session as the room is prepared. Staff choose the resources carefully so the nursery and pre-school children only access items that are appropriate to their stage of development, for example, in construction play.

The staff safeguard and promote children's welfare and have all the required procedures and documents in place. For example, all staff hold current first aid and child protection certificates. They have a secure understanding of child protection in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children develop excellent concentration to persevere in their chosen play. They enjoy a broad and balanced range of interesting activities to progress in all areas of their development. They have effective opportunities to extend their large-muscle skills during most sessions. Younger children are skilfully enabled to settle, to learn the group's routines and to gain the confidence to follow their own ideas. Staff are now aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to begin to use this in their planning for the youngest children. Children begin to make sense of the world in which they live as they explore the group's own sensory garden and enjoy exciting visits to local places when travelling by bus, train and boat.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning and very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and mathematical learning. They often use numbers in their play, for example, to say a 'shop' item costs five pounds. They confidently count at registration and during snack-time routines. They enjoy number rhymes and some calculate quickly by themselves to know how many 'cakes' have been taken and how many are left. Children gain a good understanding of shape, space and measure through practical play. For example, they feel the milk jug getting 'lighter' as they pour, create symmetrical pictures and eagerly play games to match shapes such as 'semi circles'.

Children make good progress in their learning in relation to their starting points, for example, in communication, language and literacy. They effectively develop their listening and speaking skills in frequent conversation with adults and each other. They hear words, including 'middle-sized', pronounced correctly and learn the meaning of new words such as a pencil's 'lead'. Children often use drawing materials and learn to trace their names, though do not regularly use 'writing', for example, to name their own work or in role play. Children listen intently to books shared in large and small groups. They gain good small muscle skills and co-ordination by handling many tools, including paintbrushes, scissors and sellotape machines. There are no

differences in learning between groups of children regarding gender, ability or their background. For example, all children's creative responses are valued. Boys and girls use all the dressing-up clothes and become highly involved in imaginative play in the home corner and in the 'Northway toy shop'.

Children often grapple with new ideas and skills. They explore many new interesting objects and materials, such as items beginning with a certain sound, gardening tools and mini beasts they find in the soil. They investigate changes, making good use of spontaneous opportunities as they go out in frosty weather to break the ice. Children are very interested in different aspects of computer technology and play with a real, disused oven in the home corner. They gain a good sense of time through the known routine, regular use of a timer; they eagerly noticing changes in themselves over time using baby and older child photographs.

Staff have, or are gaining a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They make very good use of their detailed assessment of children's learning to plan for their next steps. They regularly evaluate the children's responses and are effectively moving towards using these in their planning as starting points for the whole group. For example, excellent use is made of children's interest in treasure to extend their learning about making and using maps, their ability to follow a sequence of instructions, and their communication skills when they find the buried 'gold'. Staff use good methods to teach the children, based on their discoveries through play. They often ask effective questions to help them think and frequently challenge them to solve problems for themselves.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children settle well with individual support and gain good self esteem as staff create opportunities for them to make their own decisions and choices. They relate well to the different adults and are fully supported to care for each other. For example, young children are skilfully encouraged to support new ones and to pair up to move outside. Children learn that their differences are highly valued. The resources positively represent children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others.

The children with special needs are, in practice, fully supported by good liaison with parents and outside agencies. Children behave well and are polite as they follow the good role model offered by the staff. They play well together and willingly take turns in everyday tasks that give them responsibility, including changing the weather chart and giving out the snack food. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Continuity of the children's care is highly fostered by the strong relationship formed with parents who are regularly consulted regarding their care. The children benefit as families receive very good information about the group and its educational provision, for example, through excellent notices, friendly, detailed newsletters and frequent sharing of the Foundation Stage records. The families' active involvement in management and in sessions successfully enhances

the children's development and learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The bright, cheerful premises provide a welcoming environment for children who are interested in some attractive low-level displays, including a collection of 'make-it-move' toys. The required adult-child ratios are always kept as recorded in the detailed registration system for children, staff and visitors.

The detailed operational plan ensures the group works smoothly to benefit the children. The robust employment procedures ensure the staff are vetted. There are sound systems to ensure their continuing suitability as, for example, staff's qualification needs are well supported through regular appraisal. All documents and records required for the children's care are well maintained, regularly revised and kept confidential. The group has set up a log to record any complaint and this is compliant with Ofsted's requirements.

Leadership and management are good. The playleader is highly experienced and staff are effectively supported by the new and lively management. Responsibilities are shared to well involve all staff and committee members, and to make the most of their contributions to enhance the children's well-being. The high commitment shown by key adults is effective in promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The previous care inspection recommended that the playgroup improved the procedures for induction training for staff. All staff now have thorough induction that includes all the playgroup's policies and procedures. They are encouraged to make visits to experience other early years settings. Children benefit as the setting is better organised so newer staff are now more informed about the way the setting operates and how they fit in.

The previous nursery education inspection suggested that the setting considered how to continue to develop outdoor learning opportunities for children. The enclosed, outdoor area has been extended and physical equipment installed. In conjunction with the school, wooden 'trim trail' climbing and balancing structures are in place and used regularly. The playgroup has ordered all-weather suits for children and staff so free-flow outdoor play is soon to be introduced. These improvements have had a positive effect on children's development and learning.

## **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 the parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **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):

- foster children's understanding of healthy eating through all references to foods.

#### **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):

- extend the opportunities for children to write for a purpose in their play.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)