



Avening Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101752
Inspection date	17 January 2006
Inspector	Jennifer Read
Setting Address	Sunground, Avening, Tetbury, Gloucestershire, GL8 8NW
Telephone number	01453 832695
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Registered person	Avening 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

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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?

Avening Playgroup was established in 1972 and is managed by a voluntary committee with charitable status. It operates from a purpose-built building, in the village of Avening, a rural location near the town of Tetbury in Gloucestershire. The group has an entrance hall, toilets and a main room with separate kitchen area. There is a fully enclosed outside play area with grass and hard standing surfaces with physical play equipment.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 25 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for nursery education. The group only accept children from the term in which their third birthday falls. The playgroup is open during school terms on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 09.15 to 12.00 and on a Thursday for pre-school children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. A parent-and-toddler group operates on a Wednesday afternoon. The playgroup supports a number of children with special educational needs.

The playgroup employs three members' staff. Two staff, including the play leader hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group use an adapted form of High Scope to organise children's learning. The playgroup is a member of the Playgroup and Toddler Association and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, warm environment. They stay healthy because staff follow appropriate hygienic procedures and clear guidance when children are unwell. For example, anti-bacterial liquid is sprayed into the cloth rather than directly onto the table, this helps prevent droplets getting into the air and onto children's skin. Children know the well-planned daily routines well. As a result, they learn the importance of good personal hygiene and are fully aware of their own personal care needs. Children practise rolling their sleeves up ready for hand washing before snack time, after using the toilet and joining in creative activities. They use the soap dispensers, taps and paper towels independently.

Children enjoy regular opportunities for fresh air and large physical play, which, contributes, to their good health and well-being. Subsequently, children are confident in their physical skills. They experiment with different ways of using the swing and skilfully pedal a variety of wheeled toys around obstacles. Children run, practise their jumping on the trampet and during floor games, throw and kick balls, dance and use gardening equipment and various tools with developing control. They receive appropriate guidance and support on how to use scissors, the computer mouse and writing implements. This helps improve children's control and self-confidence in their physical skills. Discussion about the importance of regular exercise and hand washing to help promote a healthy lifestyle does not currently take place. Staff provide a predictable environment and are perceptive to children's emotional needs. Individually tailored settling-in arrangements foster children's emotional well-being. This helps children feel safe, secure and have a sense of belonging.

Children benefit from a healthy and nutritious snack, develop a growing awareness of different foods through occasional discussion, and planned tasting sessions of fruits, toast, vegetables and foods from other cultures. Children enjoy their food because snack time is used as a social time and valuable learning experience as they recall their play experiences daily. However, they do not help to hand round their plates, cups, and snack or pour their own drinks. This restricts children's healthy

independence, opportunity to develop key skills and to be actively involved in snack time routines.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children experience a safe, secure and suitable environment and risk of accidental injury is minimised in the setting because staff implement good safety and security precautions. For example, there is a buzzer entry phone system on the gate, alarm on the outside door and daily checks of play areas indoors and outdoors. Well thought through plans take place for the safe collection of children and staff use specialist thermal cups with lids to have drinks safely at snack time. High priority is given to help promote children's awareness of safety. They learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe through positive discussion and useful questioning most of the time about potential dangers. For example, 'Why mustn't we go on the climbing frame?', 'we don't want to fall over in the playground because? Why?' As a result, children show good understanding of how to stay safe and are able to describe the emergency escape plan clearly.

Play areas are suitable and children use the indoor and outdoor space safely for different activities. Plans to renovate the garden and provide an under cover area are currently underway to provide a safe, shaded area to protect children in all weathers. Children's pictures, displays, photographs and posters adorn the walls, which makes the setting inviting and welcoming. They play with a comprehensive range of safe, good quality and developmentally appropriate toys, games and play materials. Bright, bold labelling and shelving units' at child height enables children to make safe choices in their play. Staff safeguard and protect children because they know their roles well, are vigilant and comply with health and safety requirements. Adults who are not checked are closely monitored and the play leader ensures staff attend child protection training where possible and receive a copy of the policies.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The quality of experiences is offered to all ages of children to help ensure a smooth transition for children as they move to the pre-school session. Children show a strong sense of belonging as they settle quickly for circle time and free play with toys and activities of their choice. They are friendly and confident with each other, visitors and staff, and enjoy many opportunities to work together as they play happily using, and sharing resources, for example, 'I'm making a cake for my party, do you want to join in?' Staff show interest in what children do, say and they adopt aspects of the High Scope approach purposefully. As a result, children are confident communicators and develop these skills successfully as they discuss, plan and share information about their experiences each session.

Children actively join in a wide range of activities and experiences to support and encourage their play and development. They enjoy being creative as they use

various recyclable materials to create a fire engine. They choose materials imaginatively to represent objects and describe enthusiastically their purpose. Children enjoy making choices about activities and their play as they self-select construction materials independently. This enables children to make connections, freely express themselves and help make experiences real and meaningful. Children show interest in books, and most listen comfortably to stories read by staff. They explore pouring, filling and using different implements and tools when playing in the water, various malleable media and using gardening tools. Children begin to develop autonomy in their play because staff recognise many learning opportunities and facilitate children's ideas to extend their experiences.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Children are happy, settled and make sound progress because staff seek adequate information about children's attainment on entry and have a generally good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how to apply this in practice. However, staff show little awareness of individual children's progress against the stepping stones. Regular evaluation of the provision and activities mean staff are able to promote children's play and learning satisfactorily and begin to focus on aspects that require improvements. Planning has improved and covers all areas of learning but links to children's individual learning needs, to further challenge and support their progress is not clear. This may affect children's progress over time because staff are unable to provide purposeful support in their learning. Observation, assessments, and the use of information gained from them are satisfactory, but sometimes inconsistent. For example, they do not link closely to inform future planning and children's next steps in their learning. Activities, resources and the environment are sensitively adapted to enable children who have special educational needs to participate readily alongside their peers.

Children readily show interest and take part in a range of purposeful, first-hand activities. Children have a satisfactory level of independence and respond appropriately to challenges in their learning. They are curious as they investigate how the animals are inserted into the ice blocks, for instance, 'I think it jumped in your freezer when you weren't looking', and respond positively to staff's useful questions to extend their learning, 'When the ice gets warm and hot what happens?', 'Which animals live under water?' This helps make activities interesting and sustains children's enjoyment and concentration appropriately. Most children use their time purposefully as they observe winter pictures, show interest in change and how things work as they rip and decorate paper to represent icicles. Children that are more able, sustain attentive listening during group times and initiate conversation to articulate their ideas and describe what they are making, 'It's a dinosaur, it's a Pterodactyl'. However, grouping of children during some planned activities does not effectively meet all children's needs, as a result, children become restless and miss valuable learning opportunities.

Children develop good levels of co-ordination as they use scissors, various tools and writing implements in the role-play and sand. Children are curious and experiment with their toys and play materials, for instance, 'I writing in the sand look it's sparkly on there' as they use a pencil to make marks on their notepad. They use their

senses, show interest in living things and learn to care for plants and their environment. They enjoy digging, planting and caring for their bulbs, vegetables and seeds in the allocated garden area and use information technology with growing dexterity and skill. Children are confident in their use of numbers as they count and recognise numbers beyond 10 in some daily routines, however, some teaching methods do not enable children to compare, calculate and ascribe meaning to marks. For example, staff write children's names on their pictures and do not encourage children to make representations and to link letters and sounds. As a result, children miss opportunities to talk about their name, the letters and to practise their early writing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's needs are well met and those with special needs are warmly welcomed. They are valued as individuals because the staff liaise closely with parents and carers and are secure in their knowledge of the children to support their needs successfully. Children develop a good cultural awareness, and positive view of others through wide ranging, well-planned activities and experiences. For example, they celebrate festivals, taste different foods with a variety of utensils, dress up and play with resources, which reflect their backgrounds and show positive images of diversity. This helps make experiences real and meaningful. They visit the post office to buy stamps and post letters, the church to talk and ask questions of the Reverend and enjoy visitors to the setting with animals, a fire engine and road safety materials. This helps broaden children's experiences and enable them to gain a greater insight into their local community.

Close monitoring and partnership with parents and other professionals supports children with special needs effectively. Staff adapt routines and activities appropriately to promote inclusion, which helps increase children's sense of belonging. Children behave well and benefit from a consistent, calm and positive approach to manage their behaviour. As a result, children listen and respond to staff's guidance, are happy, self-assured and enjoy their time at the playgroup. They take turns and share co-operatively because successful methods are in place. For instance, a child collects the timer and waits his turn patiently to go on the tractor. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children benefit from a positive and friendly partnership with parents and staff. Parents are usefully employed as helpers and take an active part in their child's care. Notice boards contain useful detail to help keep parents well informed including regular and informative newsletters; minutes of committee meetings; children's activities; policies and procedures and parent questionnaires. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. The prospectus contains general information about the setting, the Foundation Stage of learning, stepping stones and detailed information about High Scope. Staff share information with parents about their child's learning informally through discussion, access to their child's profile booklet and a general written report at the end of their pre-school year. On-going information throughout the year about all children's progress and details of

how parents can support and extend the activities at home is not available. This restricts parent's ability to contribute fully to the playgroup and their child's development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The staff team are committed, enthusiastic and work well together to support children's welfare. The play leader successfully motivates staff to take advantage of ongoing training and is currently addressing qualification requirements to promote children's welfare and development. Acceptable appraisal systems and ratios of adults to children means children are happy, safe and never left alone with persons not vetted. However, recruitment procedures are not sufficient or follow new guidelines, and induction arrangements are not in place to date. Therefore, secure systems for the current recruitment of new staff are not rigorous to ensure they have a sound knowledge of new information and understanding of the groups' policies and procedures. This may influence children's welfare over time.

Children benefit from well-organised resources and creative use of space to meet their needs appropriately. Activities are presented appropriately and areas left clear. This helps encourage children to take an active involvement in an appropriate range of opportunities and experiences and to entice them to make independent choices in their play. Organisation and grouping of children during some daily routines is not effective to further extend and develop those children that are more able. Policies and procedures are readily available to parents and work generally well in practice. However not all the necessary records or all the required procedures are in place, up-to-date or contain all the essential details necessary to ensure children are well cared for. This limits staff and parents knowledge and restricts their ability to contribute fully to playgroup life to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and welfare.

The play leader has a clear vision for the playgroup and monitors the groups' strengths and areas for improvement appropriately. For example, parent questionnaires on a yearly basis. She works closely with staff, parents and the committee to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching. Regular discussion, general evaluation of activities and support from the committee helps give staff a clear direction and contributes to continuity in children's care. Informative evidence is collated and organised innovatively in line with the National Standards to show how staff meet children's care needs. However, at present these do not link to outcomes for children. Documentation is clear and efficiently organised to safeguard children's welfare. Records, including daily attendance, accident and medication are accurate and shared with parents to protect children's well-being. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider was asked to: develop staff's knowledge of the

identification and assessment of special educational needs; to record accurately children's, staff's and visitors times of arrival and departure and to review group policies and procedures and share with staff and parents.

The playgroup implements secure systems to identify and assess children and monitor their progress appropriately to meet their individual care needs. Parents sign the children in and out and record accurate times. The visitor's book is used successfully and staff show who is present on the premises but omit to record times of arrival and departure to safeguard and protect children's welfare. The operational plan is a working document and is currently being reviewed to address inadequacies and to promote children's health, safety and welfare.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that staff's knowledge of the foundation stage was improved; planning was developed in line with the early learning goals; opportunities for children to practise their emergent writing skills in role-play contexts was extended and information to parents about the foundation stage of learning was developed.

The playgroup has made steady progress to support and encourage children's learning. Staff show a growing knowledge of the foundation stage and continue to develop planning in line with the stepping stones to meet children's individual interest and learning. Writing materials are readily available in the home corner to enable children to scribe and make marks for a purpose. Parents receive adequate information about the foundation stage of learning to enable them to show an interest in their child's learning. However, parents would like to receive more detail about this and their child's progress against the stepping stones.

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 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 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 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):

- devise and implement a rigorous system for the recruitment and induction of staff and ensure suitable processes are in place to access their continuing suitability to effectively meet children's individual needs.
- help build children's awareness of the importance of regular exercise to promote a healthy lifestyle.

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):

- develop further the observation and assessment systems to ensure they link closely to inform future planning to meet children's individual learning needs.
- increase opportunities for children to calculate and compare during everyday situations; and provide opportunity for children that are more able to hear and say initial sounds of letters, to ascribe meaning to marks and attempt writing for different purpose.
- develop further the partnership with parents to share information about how parents can encourage and support their child's learning at home, the stepping stones and regular formal information about children's progress against these.

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