



Whittlesford Preschool Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 221767
Inspection date 25 January 2006
Inspector Veronica Sharpe

Setting Address Whittlesford Memorial Hall, Mill Lane, Whittlesford, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB2 4NE
Telephone number 07799092056
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Registered person Whittlesford Pre-School 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?

Whitsers Pre-school is in the village of Whittlesford, near Cambridge. It operates from the village memorial hall, which was built in 2000. There is an enclosed outdoor play area with some fixed climbing equipment. The pre-school operates as a registered charity, managed by a committee of parents. Children who attend mainly live in the local area.

There are currently 25 children from 3 to under 5 years on roll. This includes 21

children who are eligible for nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Opening times are term times only 09.00 to 12.00 Monday to Friday, except for Wednesday, when the session starts at 09.15. There are optional 1/2 hour lunchtime sessions for older children.

The pre-school employs 4 members of staff all of whom have childcare qualifications to Level 3. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene through well-planned, consistent daily activities. All the children conscientiously wash their hands appropriately, for example, before eating or taking part in a cooking activity. They show good levels of independence as they visit the toilets by themselves, or use tissues to wipe their noses. Staff show children good role models by washing their own hands and wiping down tables and furniture before and after meals.

Children's health and welfare is promoted well because there are rigorous systems in place to record accidents and medication. Accidents are recorded on individual sheets, which are then countersigned by parents to ensure they are fully aware of any accidents or incidents. Children receive appropriate treatment as all the staff have up to date first aid training. Emergency telephone numbers are easily accessible in case parents or appropriate professionals need to be contacted. However, the document that enables staff to seek emergency medical help or advice refers specifically to accidents and this may affect children's care if they are ill.

Children develop their interest in physical activities as they play active games in the garden or indoors. They play outside each day regardless of the weather and enjoy a wide range of activities, such as using wheeled toys, bats and balls or digging in the vegetable garden. Indoors they play active games, such as music and movement or have a 'physical education' lesson to extend their physical skills.

Children sit together at snack time to enjoy a relaxed and social occasion, where they chat with staff and each other and share news about their day. Staff discuss foods with the children, for example, the ingredients for the vegetable stir fry cooked to celebrate Chinese New Year. This enables them to learn about and identify which foods are 'good' or 'bad' for them. Children play an active part in learning about healthy living, they grow various foods, such as potatoes in the garden and enjoy cooking activities. Water is always available so children can help themselves throughout the session so they are well-hydrated. Staff record any allergies or special dietary needs so that children eat appropriate meals. However, volunteers who do not always know about children's special needs sometimes serve the snacks and this may affect children's health if they receive inappropriate food.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a clean, well-maintained environment, which is well decorated and cheerful, so children and parents feel welcome. Good organisation of the furniture and resources means that children move around safely and freely. Children independently access the resources from shelves, boxes and other low level storage. Equipment used by the children is safe and plentiful and appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Detailed risk assessments and daily checks ensure the suitability of the premises and staff monitor the pattern of accidents to minimise risks. Staff are vigilant and implement good security procedures, such as checking any adults collecting children who are unknown to staff. Children enjoy outings in safety as staff implement sound procedures, such as carrying a mobile phone and emergency contact details.

Children's welfare is promoted well. All the staff have a good understanding of the local child protection procedures and regularly attend training to update their knowledge. Parents are well informed about the setting's responsibilities through an appropriate policy, which is included in the parents' brochure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive at pre-school with eager anticipation. They separate from their carers with confidence and greet staff with enthusiasm before they happily settle to their self-chosen activities. They form strong friendships with their peers and enjoy warm and affectionate relationships with staff.

Children benefit from a wide range of activities, both indoors and out that contribute to their progress and enable them to be independent learners. Staff organise the activities and resources before children arrive and this ensures they feel welcome and valued. Younger and newer children benefit from the keyworker system, which enables them to develop secure relationships in partnership with their parents and carers.

Nursery Education

The quality and teaching of learning is good. Children are confident learners and explore the well planned environment with eager curiosity. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a wide range of interesting activities that enable children to progress well in all the areas of learning. Assessments of children's learning are effective and pertinent, they use the stepping stones to monitor children's progress so that children's next steps can be identified. Children benefit from the free-flow play environment, where they have ample opportunities to make independent choices and develop their own learning. Although staff support and guide children with skill and sensitivity, they do not always take opportunities to extend children's independence and learning by increasing the level of challenge in their activities.

Children are confident and active, they approach their activities with enthusiasm and develop good relationships with each other. They communicate clearly and confidently, initiating conversations with their peers or the adults around them. They delight in listening to stories in both small and large groups and enjoy choosing books for themselves, which they handle with care and respect. Most children identify their own names with confidence and have some opportunities to develop their writing skills.

Children benefit from a wide range of activities that help them understand numbers and mathematical language. They sing rhymes and songs and use numbers in their play, for example, when filling up their vehicles with 'petrol' in role play. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is developed well through a good range of practical activities, such as making a stir fry for Chinese New Year. Visitors to the settings and regular outings ensure children learn about their local community and develop their sense of belonging.

Children enjoy a wide range of materials, such as play dough, sand, water and paint, which helps them develop their imaginations. They make cards, using tools such as scissors and glue sticks with competence, confidently cutting out shapes and discussing suitable joining materials with staff. Music helps children explore sounds, they move to music to express their feelings and make their own music with a variety of musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a wide range of toys and activities that meet their individual needs. Children receive a warm welcome as they arrive at the setting and enjoy affectionate relationships with staff and each other. Their sense of belonging is enhanced as they pose for photographs that are used to show parents their many achievements and successes. Although there are no children currently on roll with special educational needs, staff have experience successfully supporting children in the past.

Children take part enthusiastically in the activities that help them develop a positive view of their local community and the wider world. They develop their interest in the world around them through topics and practical activities, such as preparing food for a Chinese meal to celebrate Chinese New Year. Parents contribute what they know in the form of books, music and dressing up clothes so that festivals and events from other cultures are relevant and interesting. Children learn about their local community as they go for walks to the local park or to the primary school and visitors, such as the community police, come to talk to the children.

Children play harmoniously together and show kindness and consideration towards each other, for example, they help each other dress or undress for role play. Children know what to expect because staff give them clear instructions and help children deal with disputes by encouraging them to share and to say 'sorry'. As a result their behaviour is very good. Children's social, moral, spiritual, cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with the parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive good information about the setting and the Foundation Stage. They freely access their children's records of development and welcome the opportunity to contribute what they know about their children. Parents speak highly of the staff and the educational provision. They value the parents rota as it gives them insight into how their children learn and enables them to observe their child's progress and attitudes first hand.

Children have their needs met because staff and parents work together and good information is sought from parents to ensure staff know children well. Keyworkers liaise with parents and develop strong relationships with them, which ensures children are well cared for. Settling in procedures are flexible to reflect the needs of the child and parents are welcome to attend for as long as necessary so their children are secure and confident.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the good organisation of resources and play space. They make choices and develop their own ideas and interests as they play. Staff work as a team to provide effective support, helping children enjoy a wide range of exciting and worthwhile activities. Children are well cared for and progress well because staff have a commitment to their own professional development and undertake training to widen their knowledge and develop good early years practice. For example, they are aware of the importance of developing their knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to enhance the care given to children aged under three years.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by well-maintained and generally comprehensive documentation. Staff and parents work together to ensure that all necessary consents are in place and that information about children's care is relevant and up to date. Overall, the provision meet the needs of the children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Children progress well in all areas because skilled and qualified staff plan and provide a good range of meaningful activities. Informal evaluation of the provision through discussion and questioning of parents enable staff and committee to review the quality of the education and plan for the future.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure all parents are aware of the policies and procedures. Copies of the policies are displayed in the entrance hall and statements about important policies, such as child protection are included in the parent's prospectus.

For nursery education the setting was asked to continue to review the planning to make sure all the areas of learning are covered, including planning for physical development during outside play. Planning is detailed and covers all the areas of

learning, using the stepping stones to ensure each area is covered in sufficient depth. Staff plan a range of activities both indoors and out that promote children's physical development.

The setting was also asked to ensure all staff are fully aware of the learning intention of each activity. Staff are qualified and experienced practitioners who are fully aware of the learning intentions. To inform parents and volunteers at the sessions guidance for each activity ensures they know how to question and guide children appropriately.

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.

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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):

- amend the wording of the parental permission to seek medical help so it covers all eventualities
- ensure adults serving food and drink to children are fully aware of any allergies and parental preferences.

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 children's opportunities to further develop their learning and independence by increasing the level of challenge in their activities.

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