



Playtimes Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY245626
Inspection date	05 October 2006
Inspector	Clare Elizabeth Pook
Setting Address	Ferriman Road, Spaldwick, Cambs, PE28 0TQ
Telephone number	01480 890077
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Registered person	Playtimes 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?

The group Playtimes Playgroup is an established playgroup which moved to these premises in 2002. It has a new purpose built building with a large playroom and adjacent outdoor play area. It is located in the village of Spaldwick.

A maximum of 25 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The play group is open each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30 and a lunch club from 11.30 to 12.45 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 25 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from Spaldwick and surrounding villages.

The play group currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also has appropriate systems in place to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted satisfactorily by staff recognising and reducing possible risks. Staff take some positive steps to prevent the spread of infection by encouraging children to wash their hands before snacks and after toileting. However, this is not always supervised adequately or discussed with children to ensure that children are learning about the importance of hand washing. Appropriate arrangements are in place if children are ill. Staff are trained in administering first aid and have appropriate permissions and records in place regarding the administration of medication to children. They keep records of all accidents in the setting and inform parents.

Children have plenty of opportunity to gain fresh air and exercise. Staff organise the sessions so that children use the outdoor facilities during most of the session. The outdoor sessions are not always planned so although children enjoy the free play, the equipment and resources are not used fully to help develop children's physical skills effectively. Children are able to negotiate space well when peddling the cars or scooting, being careful not to run anyone over. Children use scissors accurately and staplers to join paper, or additional support is provided from the staff if needed. Children thread beads and build with range of construction materials, which promotes fine motors and hand to eye co-ordination skills.

Children's healthy eating is promoted as healthy and nutritious snacks such as fresh pineapple, peaches, raisins, oranges and bananas are offered at snack time. Children are able to access their own water throughout the sessions when they are thirsty in addition to the water and milk offered during snack time. Children are learning about keeping their body healthy through topic work.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure premises, which is welcoming for children and parents. Doors are kept locked and staff supervise children coming into and leaving with parents and carers. The room is organised effectively, creating a child friendly environment which enables children to explore and take risks while being appropriately supervised. Children use a comprehensive range of toys and equipment that are safe and of good quality. They access resources independently. Equipment is kept clean and in a good state of repair and is frequently checked for safety. Adults are deployed effectively so that children are supervised at all times.

Clear policies and practices, including effective risk assessments, are in place to keep children safe on the premises and during outings. Children are involved in the planning of fire practices by making a pretend fire and hiding in the room for other children to discover and then follow a safe evacuation procedure. They are learning to keep themselves safe by being aware of their bodies when bending down under low things so as not to bang their heads and how to carry and use scissors safely.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Children are cared for by adults who are vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children access a good range of activities, which staff thoughtfully plan and prepare, to encourage children to develop skills and have fun. Topics are carefully designed to be interesting and cover a wide range of experiences, for example, ourselves, harvest, healthy eating. Children can freely access the outdoors and additional resources such as water, drawing and painting are taken outside.

Warm and caring relationships between adults and children are evident. They communicate easily with each other and this helps children to enjoy and achieve. Children work well alongside each other, sharing and taking turns fairly when playing dominos or using the computer. They co-operate well together completing a Noddy puzzle.

Staff have a suitable understanding of how to accommodate younger children. They have started to incorporate the 'Birth to three matters' framework into their planning. Activities are adapted to enable the younger child to take part for example drawing themselves, whilst older children extended to draw familiar people as well.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Most of the staff working with funded children are qualified or are working towards recognised qualifications. Staff have different levels of understanding regarding the Foundation Stage Curriculum, which at present hinders children from meeting their potential. All aspects of planning are in place, but are not yet fully understood by all staff. This training is being cascaded to staff so that in time all staff will be involved in planning. Staff observe and assess children daily. A key worker system is in the process of being introduced as well as guidance on ensuring the observations made are effective to make accurate assessments of what the children can do and plan for their next steps. Staff support children well, interact and have fun playing alongside children. Staff encourage the children to become involved and to persevere with tasks such as completing puzzles and games. Staff use a variety of methods to teach and promote learning including open-ended questions to extend their thinking, for example, 'what is this part of the car called'. They listen to the children offer encouragement and support when needed, for example helping put on aprons, constructing the railway and building steps with the Duplo.

Children are confident speakers who chat happily to their friends and staff. They are confident to talk about their toy they have bought in from home, 'Look at all things in my bag'. Labelling around the room helps children to understand that print carries meaning as well as being able to find resources easily. Children are encouraged to find their own names at the beginning of the session and at snack time. Children listen attentively to stories and pretend to read stories to their peers in role play situations, however opportunities for children to explore phonic sounds are limited. Resources are set out for children to mark make, but the more able child is not encouraged to attempt to write their name and opportunities for children to use writing for a variety of purposes is rare.

Children use mathematical language readily when talking about the peg towers being 'the tallest or shortest'. Simple calculation is explored and introduced when singing songs such as five current buns, however some opportunities are missed in every day situations such as counting the cups and plates for snack time. Children demonstrate good problem solving skills. They find solutions to problems such as not having enough space on a page to stick pictures and persevere at completing difficult puzzles. Children explore shape through sorting activities and use tape measures in the home corner to measure objects.

Children are competent on the computer and are developing mouse skills. They have good opportunities to use simple equipment such as tills in the home corner, 'V-Tech' computers and are given support when using the 'Bee-Bot' for learning directions. Children take part in celebrating each others birthdays and are learning about different cultural festivals through planned activities, books and topic work.

Children sing familiar songs in group sessions. Children use their imagination to express their ideas in role play situations such as pretending to mothers and babies. Some children draw family members in detail. They describe their facial features and parts of their body such as tummy buttons as they draw. Staff encourage children to express their ideas on the free collage or painting table or when carrying out a directed art activity. For example a child describes what they are painting on the fish 'I am drawing the fishes breakfast'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff understand policies on equal opportunities and work within them. Staff foster links with children's own cultures where relevant and gain information from parents about family celebrations and traditions. Children have access to a broad range of resources, play opportunities and activities, which reflect diversity and acknowledge differing abilities.

Staff have set clear boundaries of children's behaviour that is appropriate to the age and stage of children's development. They make sure children are not bored or frustrated, but are busy and content. They direct children's energy into positive situations for example when children became unsettled in the home corner staff redirected them to help complete a floor puzzle. Children are polite and well-mannered remembering to say 'please' and 'thank you' at snack times.

Children show pride in their work and are keen to share it with their parents for example showing dad the fish they have made. Their work is valued and displayed attractively around the room. Children respond well to requests from staff to tidy up and work well to do this, again staff praise them for helping. Show and tell allows children to share experiences and special toys from home promoting a sense of belonging.

Children show a keen interest in some new activities for example the introduction of the free flow system between indoors and outdoors. However at other times new routines can be unsettling and children are not aware of what they should be doing as it has not been clearly explained to them for example the changing arrangements for snack time.

Children with special needs are valued and respected. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that the best support and care for their child is provided. Situations are handled sensitively and professionally. Additional help in the form of one to one workers, is available where necessary. Information is gathered from other professionals from their visits to the group and shared, so that children feel secure and are fully included.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. This contributes to the progress and well-being of the children, including those who receive funded nursery education. Parents are informed about the Foundation Stage and are kept updated regularly through newsletters and photos displaying the previous weeks activities. Parents are able to speak to staff on a daily basis to exchange information or through their individual communications books. Parents evenings are arranged for parents to discuss with staff their children's progress and look at their files. Notice boards keep parents updated on important issues and general information.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy and settled. They enjoy activities and make satisfactory progress because staff create an environment where they have appropriate space and resources to do so. The staff organise the sessions so that where possible children can free flow between indoors and outdoors. Additional resources are taken outside to extend the range of activities available. Children are able to choose and make decisions about what they do. A rota of staff deployment is in place to support children with activities, however this is not always followed or communicated well to staff so some staff are unaware of what they should be doing. New changes to routines are not always introduced to the children, so they do not feel secure in what they are doing or what is expected of them.

Suitable policies and procedures are in place and records are maintained appropriately and available for inspection. Information gathered from parents is made known to staff, to ensure that their wishes are followed. This ensures that children receive suitable care.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

The staff team and committee are new and are working hard to build relationships and develop communication skills, which are a weakness. They are focused on improving the provision for children and developing their individual roles. They are attending training such as management training to help develop their personal skills so that everyone can benefit from them. Appraisal systems have been set up and monitoring of new staff is in hand. Staff are motivated and keen to improve the care and education for all children.

Overall, the provision meets the range of children's needs who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been several staff and committee changes. Although improvements have been made, some areas have lapsed during the changes. Staff have been made aware of this and will ensure the previous recommendations are still taken into consideration.

Policies and procedures have been reviewed and are being updated. All necessary consents are in place from parents so that staff can act in the best interests of the children and in accordance with parental wishes. New systems for planning are in place and learning intentions are now clearly linked to the activities so that staff are aware of how to support children in their learning. The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world has been developed to include opportunities for children to explore nature through first hand experiences and access resources more easily. This is still being developed. The committee has changed. Some key members have booked onto a management course to help aid them in their new role in supporting and monitoring staff and ensuring the playgroup runs smoothly.

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):

- develop organisational skills to ensure new systems are introduced slowly and clearly so that children and staff are aware of the changes and that their needs are met effectively
- improve children's understanding of healthy eating and good hygiene practices through routine activities

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):

- improve communication skills and systems for all staff and management to build on relationships within the new team and to ensure that staff are aware of their role
- increase opportunities for the more able child to become familiar with phonic sounds and develop their handwriting skills
- improve staff knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage to enable them to successfully key work with children and fully support children in their learning

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