



## Pilgrims Way Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY273751
<b>Inspection date</b>	01 February 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Kelly Eyre
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Leys Primary school, Ripon Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 4QZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 369 519
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Pilgrims Way 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?

Pilgrims Way Playgroup is managed by a voluntary committee. It has been open for over 20 years and moved to its current premises in 2003. It operates from one room within The Leys Primary School, situated in a residential area of Stevenage, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. It is open each weekday during term-time only and sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45, with additional sessions on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 12:30 to

14:45. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local catchment area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs seven staff. Four of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment. They are learning good health and personal hygiene practices through following practical daily routines, which are clearly explained by staff so that children understand the relevance of these. Children change into indoor shoes at the start of the session, wash their hands before snack time and learn to wipe their own noses. Their special requirements with regard to health and diet are clearly documented and staff ensure that these are respected. Children's growth and development are promoted because they are offered a variety of nutritious foods at snack time, including fresh fruit, breadsticks and milk.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities, which contribute to their good health. They regularly use the outdoor play area, or space is made indoors, so that they are able to use larger play equipment such as climbing frames, slides and ride-on toys. They also practise and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in sessions where they jump from one coloured mat to another, balance along beams, jump over a low bar, climb through upright hoops and crawl through a tunnel. They show developing skills in smaller physical movements, for example, they are learning to use scissors correctly and construct objects using a range of materials and construction sets.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where there are creative displays of their work and resources are well organised and easily accessible. Their safety is prioritised and staff carry out daily safety checks, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise these. A major risk assessment has also been completed and staff are able to refer to a large file of additional safety information. This helps to ensure that children are able to move around safely, freely and independently. The daily implementation of practical policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety. However, the

emergency evacuation procedure is practiced once each year and this is not sufficient for children and staff to become familiar with the procedure.

Children are developing an understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves safe. They are consistently given clear explanations by staff to help them understand the relevance of safety rules, for example, they understand why it is important not to run inside. Children use toys and resources that are appropriate for their size and developmental stages. Staff regularly check these to ensure that they are clean and safe. Children's welfare is very well promoted because staff have attended additional training and have a good knowledge of child protection procedures and are able to identify, report and follow up any concerns.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. They enjoy their time at the playgroup and join in enthusiastically with the activities and daily routines. They are confident in their relationships with staff and are beginning to build relationships with each other. Their personal development and self-confidence are promoted through appropriate support and interaction from staff. New children settle well, quickly becoming secure within the setting because staff are calm and confident, planning ahead to ensure that children receive individual attention and support whenever needed.

Children are in a stimulating environment where they are able to access play resources and there are colourful posters and displays of their work. Despite their young age, they confidently make choices about their play and activities throughout the session. Staff quickly get to know the children well and make good use of open questions and discussions to encourage them to think further and extend their learning. Children can participate in all activities because high staff ratios mean that these can be adapted to suit each child's individual developmental needs and capabilities. An example of this is children participating in an activity where they use bricks to print ice blocks and build up a picture of an igloo; younger children are encouraged to discuss the shapes they are making and compare these to the picture in the reference book, whilst older children go on to discuss Eskimos and the climate, talking about what to wear to keep warm.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a sound knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, enabling them to plan appropriate activities which cover all areas of learning. Children spend their time purposefully because staff are skilled in monitoring them throughout the session, quickly noticing when they need encouragement and direction. Children's progress in all areas is well balanced as staff use clear assessment methods, using information gained from this to highlight areas to be covered in future activities. However, assessment is not always linked to the curriculum, making it difficult to see clearly the progress made by individual children.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities. These include regular opportunities to participate in a variety of crafts, construction, imaginative play, cooking, physical play and music sessions. Children's knowledge is further extended as they cover a variety of topics enabling them to look at themes such as 'Habitats', where they are involved in collecting and discussing information about the different places people and animals live, producing colourful displays and pictures showing the difference between climates and how these affect people's lives. Children are confident in initiating conversations and in using language to explain their thoughts, ideas and activities. They enjoy listening to stories and are beginning to understand that print carries meaning, handling books carefully and turning the pages correctly. Children are beginning to communicate through writing and have many opportunities to practice writing and mark-making, for example, choosing pencils, crayons or chalks from the designated area and exploring the use of these.

Children are motivated and enthusiastic about their play and activities. Older children are developing good relationships with their peers, playing imaginary games and negotiating turn-taking and sharing. They show developing skills in mathematics as they learn about this through number rhymes and activities such as playing with cooked spaghetti, cutting this up and confidently using size language to describe what they are doing. They are gaining an awareness of their own culture and that of others through activities, discussions and regular access to resources such as dressing-up clothes, books and puzzles, which provide both information and positive images. Children enjoy joining in with favourite songs and rhymes and show an emerging awareness of rhythm and different types of sound, for example, making musical instruments and exploring the sounds.

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

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and actively participate in the playgroup because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. They are offered a variety of activities and play opportunities which help promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. Children are respected as individuals and staff ensure that specific needs are clearly identified and consistently met. Children's behaviour is good throughout the sessions as they confidently choose their activities and share the play resources. They respond well to staff, and the positive approach and good staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified and met as there is a policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is implemented daily. Staff have attended additional training and are skilled in identifying needs and in working with parents and other professionals to ensure that children are offered the most appropriate care and support. The daily implementation of individual education plans, practical teaching methods and a good understanding of inclusion means that children participate meaningfully in all activities and routines. An example of this is the practical use of photographs of activities to ensure that children are aware of what will be happening during the session and are able to see the range of activities

available and make choices about how they spend their time.

With regard to the provision of funded nursery education, the quality of the setting's partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given initial information about the setting and the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. They are kept well informed of their children's progress and activities through discussions with staff and the use of notices to inform parents of current themes and topics. Parents are able to borrow books and educational videos from the library run by the group, enabling them to continue their children's learning at home. The positive attitude of the group helps ensure that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and appropriate care can be provided for each child.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, the needs of all children attending are met. Children's care is enhanced by the setting's good organisation and they benefit from the care provided by experienced, well-organised staff. There are stringent procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. However, Ofsted has not been given clear information about the management committee responsible for the group, which could compromise children's safety and welfare as the necessary checking process has not been completed. A clear staff induction process, regular supervision and ongoing monitoring ensure that the playgroup's policies and procedures are understood by all and are consistently applied. Some policies do not contain sufficient detail and this may result in a delay in staff taking action in an emergency.

Children's play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of space. They are able to move safely and freely between activities, enabling them to feel confident to initiate their own play and learning. Good organisation of all areas ensures that children are offered a wide range of activities and opportunities, for example, children's routines are uninterrupted because staff ensure that children are fully occupied in group stories or singing sessions before re-arranging furniture in preparation for the physical play session.

With regard to the provision of funded nursery education, the quality of leadership and management is good. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the clear understanding that the manager has of her role and responsibilities, ensuring that she is aware of all regulations. She acts as a good role model, attending additional training and demonstrating her enthusiasm and enjoyment of her daily work with children. This helps staff to feel motivated and creates a positive atmosphere within the setting. All sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of activities throughout the week. Children are given sufficient time and resources to enable them to complete their activities and tasks. Their progress is tracked through ongoing assessments and monitoring. Staff pay attention to the planning of future work, ensuring that the needs of individuals are met and the development of all children is promoted.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At their last inspection, the group was asked to look at a number of policies and procedures. They have now completed a comprehensive risk assessment, provided a policy for the exclusion of children who are infectious, and ensured that the child protection policy is based on correct procedures, as recommended by the local area child protection committee. These changes further enhance the safety and welfare of children attending the playgroup.

With regard to the provision of funded nursery education, the group was asked to increase children's opportunities to explore mark-making, imaginative play, music and information technology. They have created a designated area where children have free access to a wide range of resources, encouraging them to explore mark-making and develop early writing skills. They have provided additional resources with regard to music and role play and there is a music session timetabled each week. The group has also provided a computer and programmable toys, increasing children's understanding and awareness of these areas. Staff were also asked to improve curriculum planning. They have implemented a new planning system which is clearly linked to the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and demonstrates that all areas of learning are promoted.

### **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:

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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):

- improve fire safety by practising the fire procedure more frequently to ensure that children are familiar with this

- ensure that Ofsted is informed of all committee members and of any changes to the committee
- continue to review and develop all policies and procedures so that these contain sufficient detail to enable staff to act in the best interests of children at all times.

### **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):

- review children's assessment records so that these clearly show the progress made by children.

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