



Pickering Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400311
Inspection date	03 March 2006
Inspector	Elizabeth Patricia Edmond
Setting Address	Hall Garth, Pickering, North Yorkshire, YO18 7AW
Telephone number	07866 043914
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Registered person	Pickering 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 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?

Pickering Pre-School Playgroup is a committee run playgroup which operates from the church rooms, close to town centre. Although registered since 1992 the group was operating before registration was necessary. They are registered to provide sessional care for a maximum of 24 children aged under 5 years old. They admit children from 2 and a half years old and offer 3 sessions per week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 09.10 until 11.40, term-time only. They also run an

introduction session on Tuesdays when children may attend with a carer. A group for toddlers and babies with their parents runs on Wednesdays and Fridays.

The group is registered to provide funded nursery education to those children of eligible age. There are currently 19 children on-roll; 5 of whom receive such funding. They have support from the local education authority in this respect. There are currently 3 members of staff who work with the children. All staff have relevant qualifications and experience. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are cared for in a suitably warm and clean environment. The newly developed toilet area is a bonus and satisfactory arrangements for hand-washing are in place when the water heater is temporarily out of order. The children learn to use the mini-sink well because the staff explain about rubbing their hands together. The staff sometimes step in too readily to wipe the children's noses which hinders their understanding of this a little.

The children develop a positive approach to being active. The small outdoor area is used very well. The children enjoy outdoor play throughout the year. The more able children skilfully push the scooters with one foot and aim the ball carefully into the hoop. Indoors too, the children have daily opportunities for physical play. This means that they develop their sense of balance and their strength to a good level.

The children benefit from a basic mid-morning snack and they enjoy the social contact with their friends at that time. Although the arrangements for snacks are satisfactory they do not fully develop the children's understanding of healthy eating. Most children enjoy the small portion of fruit, but some children check several times that they will be having a sweet biscuit too because this is what they are used to. This is not good for their teeth and their future health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises whilst creating challenges for the staff are secure and the children are able to play freely because the adults identify and minimise immediate risks. The premises are secure and the children are escorted through the kitchen. They learn about playing safely in the hall because the adults remind them not to run around the furniture. There are clear emergency evacuation procedures in place which staff practice with the children regularly although most children are not very confident with this yet.

The children are able to play freely with a suitable range of equipment which is in

generally good condition and meets their developmental needs. The children confidently select freely from those presented on the low-level tables. The staff rotate the resources as necessary during the session to provide the children with as much choice as possible. The children are suitably protected because the staff have the necessary guidance on hand and they sensibly programme additional training when experienced staff leave.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are happy and settled at the playgroup and they enjoy their time there. The calm industrious atmosphere helps the young children to settle very quickly. The staff are skilled in supporting those who are a little unsettled whilst helping them to join in when they feel able. Some children sing happily to themselves as they play with the play-dough or draw their pictures. They enthusiastically take part in all their favourite activities and remain motivated throughout the session persisting for some time at the construction activities or the play-dough.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and some aspects are good. The staff work hard to present and rotate the resources to provide as much choice as possible. They have a clear understanding of how children are motivated to learn through play. Key staff develop clear individual play plans for the children covering all areas of learning. These plans whilst clearly showing the intended learning for each child for that term are not yet used fully by all staff to evaluate learning and therefore maximise the children's potential. However, the staff instinctively offer sufficient challenge to the children, sometimes with success.

The staff place high importance on all aspects of the children's personal, social and emotional development. This is a clear strength at the setting. The children are confident, motivated and fully engaged throughout the session. They freely initiate interactions with others and show a high level of independence when selecting and carrying out most activities. Most children speak with increasing clarity to talk about what they are doing. They begin to enjoy stories and rhymes. More able children occasionally recreate well known stories in their play; they spontaneously refer to the Billy Goat Gruff story as they build bridges with the planks. They begin to understand about print carrying meaning by finding their name card for snacks or sometimes to label their own work when the name cards are easily available.

The children develop a satisfactory understanding of number and can find up to five shells or three lego bricks buried in the sand when an adult is on hand to encourage them. They show an interest in shape and can use simple mathematical language to talk about their constructions. The children are naturally curious and the staff encourage their interest by providing good opportunities for them to mix water into the sand or to observe and talk about the dormant caterpillar and the unexpected butterfly in the window. The children enjoy a good range of construction toys of various sizes; they build simple towers with smaller kits and balance carefully on the bridges that they have built with the planks. Although the children play with the

telephone and till in the role play area, opportunities for children to show a keen interest in information technology are limited. The children develop their manipulative skills as they shape the play-dough and sometimes they use the tools to roll or cut the dough. They develop quite good hand-eye coordination; they aim carefully as they make patterns with the small hammers and nails.

The children develop their confidence in their creative work. They enjoy their free painting and they learn different techniques for expressing their ideas. They confidently use the props in the role play area and act out familiar experiences. They begin to sing a range of simple songs from memory and spontaneously start to sing 'Jingle Bells' as when the adults present the musical instruments. In better weather the children enjoy dancing around the maypole outdoors.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children are valued and respected as individuals; this helps them to feel settled. This is because the staff get to know about the children's needs and preferences and follow this vigilantly throughout the session. The children begin to demonstrate their acceptance and enjoyment of the diverse nature of British culture. They enjoy playing in the Chinese restaurant and they ask the adults when they can have noodles again for their snack. Although there are currently no children with special needs attending, the procedures in place and the level of recent experience of the staff suggests that any such children would be well supported.

The children are relaxed, confident and behave very well. They learn to share and take turns very well; the more able children independently sort the items for the shopping game and help each other to find items from the lists. This is because the staff have a good understanding of how to create a calm, harmonious atmosphere for the children and they give clear explanations on how to ask for a turn when necessary. The provision fosters the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents of the funded children is satisfactory and relationships are very positive. The parents receive suitable information about the style of play-based nursery-education provided and about their children's progress. Parents are invited to share information about their children at the outset of their funded education. They are not always fully aware of the ongoing individual play plans or how they can contribute to the evaluation of these. All the required documentation is in place for recording parents wishes but the policy statements are not easily available. The younger children settle very well because they develop very effective three-way relationships with their parents and the staff. They are relaxed and happy as they see the adults discuss their care in a very friendly, yet professional, way. Some parents enjoy being involved with the group at committee level and on a day-to-day basis. This further promotes the positive relationships. Parents who take part in the inspection process are overwhelmingly positive about the care and education provided. They mention particularly the calm atmosphere as being a real strength.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The staff work well as a team and quickly make effective management and staffing arrangements when key staff are suddenly unavailable. This provides the children with a strong sense of continuity and a very settled, stable environment. Similarly, although there is no formal appraisal or evaluation system in place, the staff act quickly to identify their changing training needs. The involvement of parents and the clear information on how they can help the staff often provides a good level of adult support for the children.

The shared nature of the premises creates challenges for the staff and the children's independence is inhibited slightly due to the layout of the premises. However, the staff arrive early to transform the room as much as possible into a child-friendly environment and the children are confident in the meaningful routines. This means that the children can freely access a range of suitable activities, indoors and out, which meet their developmental needs and are also obliging when they need to gather for a snack or a story.

Whilst all the necessary up-to-date documentation is in place to promote the children's care and development, the recent change to key staff means that some policy material and information needs updating and organising. Some information needs to be made more easily available to parents.

The leadership and management of the educational is satisfactory. Again, the procedures quickly put into place as key staff have left are proving to address the children's development satisfactorily. The staff have the necessary qualifications to step into this role and the new leader sensibly prioritises the immediate developmental needs of the funded children by attending to their individual play plans. The timely focus on the children's personal, social and emotional development provides a good level of stability and support for the children in this area. The group have strong links with the local authority for advice and support, and have a very positive approach to the inspection process in evaluating the provision.

Overall the needs of all the children attending are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care.

At the last care inspection a recommendation was raised regarding the children's independence. Whilst the layout of the premises continues to inhibit this to a degree, the children now develop their independence by selecting freely from the range of activities, indoors and out. Staff help the children to learn why they need to put on their coats to play outside and the more able children can do this independently. This improvement also applies to a recommendation raised in relation to the nursery education. In response to a further recommendation, a poster with Ofsted's contact details is now displayed for parents. This means that they are able to comment on

the standard of care should they wish to do so.

Nursery Education.

At the last inspection of the funded nursery education recommendations were raised to improve the children's writing skills. The group now provide opportunities to engage in mark-making and to develop hand-eye coordination at each session. This has worked well; the children are more confident in using these skills to draw and to label their own work. In response to a further recommendation, the children now develop an awareness and a certain enjoyment in cultural diversity, although the group have struggled to find many resources which show positive images of disability.

The children's individual play-plans now show clear learning intentions for each child and key staff are beginning to use these effectively for assessment purposes. There is a range of equipment which addresses the children's gross motor development. They use this freely through their time there.

A further recommendation related to the children's use of technology in their learning. Whilst the very young children currently attending clearly show their awareness of everyday technology as they play with the telephone and cash till in the Chinese restaurant, access to information technology remains a minor weakness. Other recommendations also related mainly to the level of challenge provided for the older and more able children. Although a plan was put in place at that time to address the recommendations, at the time of this inspection only very young funded children were attending.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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):

- continue to revise and update policy material and make this more easily available to parents
- further increase the children's understanding of how to stay healthy by developing the arrangements for snack and their independent management of their hygiene.

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):

- further develop the use of the children's individual play plans to maximise their potential; for example, by further involving parents and staff in the ongoing evaluation of learning.

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