



Buttons Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 108459

Inspection date 27 February 2006

Inspector Glenda Pownall

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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?

Buttons Playgroup is privately owned. It opened in 1994 and operates from a first floor hall in Dedworth Green Baptist Church. It is situated in Dedworth on the outskirts of Windsor, Berkshire. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup opens 4 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30 Monday to Thursday and from 12.30 until 15.00 Wednesday and Thursday.

There are currently 23 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 5 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area.

The nursery employs four staff. The manager and one staff member hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one staff member working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy activities inside the hall which develop their coordination and control. They climb onto and jump off the climbing frame, roll hoops and walk along the low balancing beam with increasing skill and effective support from staff. Children do not have access to an outside play area on site. However, they do have occasional use of the adjacent school playground where they can run around energetically.

Staff discuss with parents and record children's dietary and medical requirements to ensure they meet the individual needs of each child. Staff have a generally sound knowledge of the playgroup's health and hygiene policies and procedures. They support children to follow good personal hygiene practices, such as washing hands after messy activities and before eating snack. However, the children do not know why they wash their hands before eating snack.

Children begin to learn about healthy eating through fruit and vegetable tasting activities and the daily healthy snack, which consists of chopped apple and milk or water. Although children can request a drink of water, it is not readily accessible to children throughout the session. This does not improve children's understanding of the importance of taking regular drinks as a way to maintain their health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn and play in the large first floor hall, which is clean and tidy. There is sufficient space for children to move about freely. Staff endeavour to make it a welcoming environment for parents and children. For example, they decorate the staircase with children's work, provide useful information for parents and greet everyone individually. However, in cold weather, the hall is cold and the ground floor toilet and nappy changing area is extremely cold. This does not promote the health of children.

Young children adapt well to use the mixture of nursery and adult sized tables and chairs. Children sit on a carpet with their backs to the cold wall to listen to individual stories. They do not have a comfortable quiet area to rest and relax in. Children use a satisfactory range of resources appropriate to their age and stage of development that covers all areas of learning. Effective safety checks by staff ensure the resources are safe and suitable for children to use.

The manager carries out a daily risk assessment on the environment to minimise the risks to children's safety. For example, she ensures the fire escape is free from hazards and exposed electric sockets are covered. Children begin to learn about good road safety practices through singing action rhymes and group discussions. Staff have undertaken training to refresh their knowledge of child protection. They know the local procedures to follow should a concern arise about a child. This protects children whilst in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The staff team is consistent each day and this ensures most children leave their main carers with ease and happily settle into the session. Children form positive relationships with staff and each other. They readily approach staff for help, such as to put painting aprons on and chat with their neighbour at snack time. Children freely make choices about which activities they participate in and select some resources for themselves. This begins to develop their independence skills. Staff foster children's self-esteem by allowing them to experiment with materials at activities. For example, staff on seeing children at a printing activity explore the paint with their hands, offer praise and encouragement and provide further textured paper.

Staff introduce new words to young children, such as, the name for a baby cat is a kitten. They repeat back to children what they have said to reinforce the correct pronunciation of words. This develops children's language skills. Children learn accepted rules of behaviour by clear guidance from staff. For example, staff explain to a child why another child is on 'his' chair that he left, whilst enabling him still to be involved in the activity. Staff position themselves in the book corner during the session. Children enjoy choosing stories for staff to read to them.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most staff have a working knowledge of the early learning goals, although some are unclear about how activities link to the different areas of learning. Staff plan a range of activities which cover all aspects of learning. However, the whole group story is not a positive learning experience for all children. The books used are too small for the entire group to see the pictures and the use of props is not effective in engaging all children's interest. As a result, children become disinterested in the story, they start to chat to the child next to them, select their own books to look at or turn their back on the reader. This is distracting for other children.

The planning documents do not identify how staff should adapt activities to meet individual children's stage of development. Evaluation of these documents occasionally comments on individual children's achievements but is usually general referring to 'most children' and 'older children'. Whilst staff use their initiative to adapt activities to follow children's interests they do not always provide sufficient challenge. For example, when a child easily completes several puzzles of the same difficulty staff at the activity do not provide her with a more challenging puzzle. Staff record observations of children's achievements. However, the assessment records do not

easily identify children's progress along the stepping stones or their targeted next steps in learning.

Staff spend most of their time actively involved in children's learning and generally use open-ended questions to encourage children to think. However, sometimes the organisation of the daily routine takes staff away from activities and children lose interest. For example, children actively involved in a letter and number recognition activity walk away when the supporting member of staff leaves to take another child to the toilet. Children concentrate and persevere to complete tasks with good support from staff. They wait their turn at the climbing frame and happily work alongside each other to produce one piece of artwork. By displaying this artwork, staff foster a sense of self-worth.

Staff listen to what children say. Children talk confidently in one to one situations and some use speech well to retell real events in their own lives and to develop imaginative play. Children use books for pleasure, turning pages from left to right and pointing to the characters in the story. Children begin to develop awareness of letters and the sounds they make through activities connected to the daily routine. Children use a range of resources to make marks, such as paints, chalks and pencils. Some children can trace over the initial letter of their first name. Staff do not give children the chance to attempt to write their names on their work as they automatically write it for them.

Children count as part of the daily routine and a few children can count to 10 and beyond. Children sing number song and rhymes to develop their knowledge of counting and calculation. A few children can add one more on. Children show interest in the activities available. For example, a child enthusiastically comments on the repeating pattern the tractor wheels make in the paint. Children have some opportunities to find out about and operate simple technology. For example, they use a torch in the role-play area and make silhouettes with an overhead projector. They also sing with the karaoke machine but cannot load the tapes for themselves, as this part of the machine is broken.

Children's manipulative skills are developing well. They use scissors, paintbrushes, and glue sticks with increasing skill and dexterity. Children access a range of activities to develop their creative skills, such as, painting, junk modelling, play dough and collage. Staff listen to the children's ideas and adapt activities to include these. This encourages children to extend their ideas. For example, at the children's request the role-play area became a cave and is soon to have a fire engine. Children enjoy choosing action songs and rhymes to sing. A particular favourite at the moment is 'The wheels on the tractor go round and round'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have generally equal access to all resources. However, staff are not proactive in ensuring that girls have the same chances to use all role-play areas as boys. For example, on consecutive weeks staff observe and record on the weekly

evaluation sheet that boys dominate the 'cave'. Staff do not plan how they will make this activity equally accessible to girls. Staff plan a range of topics to widen children's knowledge of the world around them. These include celebrating festivals different to their own, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. Children develop further understanding of the local community through outings in the local area. They collect and distribute harvest parcels to local elderly residents and attend the nearby primary school to watch plays. There is an effective system in place to support children with special educational needs although none currently attend. Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered.

Staff act as good role models to children, they are calm and polite and treat each other, children and visitors with respect. Children respond to the gentle reminders from staff to say please and thank you. They behave very well. Children are familiar with the daily routine as staff give clear explanation about the different aspects of the session. Children cooperate with staff and willingly help to tidy away resources. Some staff do not encourage children to respect the dignity and privacy of others with regard to toileting etiquette. For example, whilst a child is using the toilet the staff member and other children stand in the room with the child.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff provide parents with regular opportunities to exchange information with their child's key worker to find out and share their children's interests and progress. For example, staff speak with parents at either end of the session and a two-way communication book is in place for each child. Parents also have the opportunity to attend twice-yearly parents meetings to discuss their child's progress in more detail. Staff provide parents with the settings policies and procedures. They discuss Birth to three matters and the Foundation Stage at the initial visit and subsequent parents meetings to ensure parents are familiar with the running of the group. The weekly plan sheet is on display to parents outlining some activities for the week and giving suggestions of how parents can continue the theme with their child at home. Children benefit from this positive interaction between home and playgroup and are generally confident within the environment. However, the setting does not record comments made from parents or use them to plan the next steps in learning to further children's progress. Parents state they are happy with the care and education their children receive.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All required policies are in place, although some do not detail recent changes in legislation. For example, the complaints procedure does not include the timescale for a written response to the complainant. The health policies do not detail notifying Ofsted of two or more cases of food poisoning. Staff with responsibility for deputising for the manager are also not aware of these changes. This does not promote the well-being of all children. Not all accident records contain sufficient detail as some have the date, time or parent signature missing. The setting has a commitment to training as all staff regularly attend training, workshops and meetings to develop further their knowledge of early years practice.

There is a relaxed atmosphere in the sessions where staff listen to children and change activities to follow the children's interests. With the exception of the group story time, children are interested in the activities available throughout the session. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and sessions run smoothly. The setting is generally well supplied, although it has few resources to develop further children's knowledge of technology. Staff are responsible for updating their key worker children's records. The manager monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the nursery education through working in the setting, observing and talking to staff and recording a weekly evaluation of the activities. This is not effective in ensuring that all staff are aware of the links between activities and the early learning goals. It does not ensure staff identify targeted next steps in learning for each child.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection recommends the setting inform parents of the regulator's details should they have a complaint. A poster is on display to parents detailing the contact number and address for Ofsted. This ensures parents are able to pass on any concerns about the childcare of the setting, which is in the best interests of all children.

The last education inspection recommends the playgroup improve staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage and their involvement in planning and implementing a balanced curriculum. All staff are involved in the planning of the curriculum, which covers all aspects of learning. Most staff have undertaken Foundation Stage training and have a sound knowledge of what children are intended to learn from different activities. However, other staff are not as knowledgeable. This does not promote the learning of all children.

The last education inspection recommends improving staff management of children's behaviour, involving children in more worthwhile activities and increasing the opportunities children have to use books informally. Staff are effectively deployed at activities and offer children lots of praise and encouragement throughout the session. This promotes the good behaviour of children. The hall is set up ready for children to arrive and they show interest in the activities available, which generally meets their needs effectively. Despite having nowhere comfortable to sit, children enjoy choosing books for staff to read during the session and looking at books independently. This develops children's understanding of using language for reading.

The inspection also asked the setting to improve the access parents have to view their child's developmental records. In order to ensure confidentiality, children's progress records are kept securely offsite. However, parents may request to see these records at anytime and they will be available at the next session their child attends.

Complaints 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.

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- update policies and procedures in line with current legislation and make all staff aware of these changes
- provide children with a comfortable area to relax in and ensure an adequate temperature for children to play in and staff to work in is maintained
- make certain children's privacy is respected when they are using the toilet facilities and ensure all children have equal opportunities to use all role play areas.

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):

- ensure all staff have a secure knowledge of the stepping stones leading towards the early learning goals
- develop and monitor the planning and assessment systems to ensure they incorporate comments from parents, clearly identify children's progress along the stepping stones and their targeted next steps in learning
- provide more opportunities for children to use a variety of technology, attempt to write their name on their work and review the delivery of the group story time to provide a positive learning experience for all children.

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