



Central Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218112
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Inspector	Ann Winifred Harrison
Setting Address	Moorgate School, Hospital Street, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B79 7EE
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Registered person	Central Playgroup Committee
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?

Central Playgroup is run by a committee and opened in 1974. It operates from rooms on the site of Moorgate Primary School in Tamworth. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11.45 and on Wednesday from 12.45 to 15.15. The setting also operates a lunch club each weekday from 11.45 to 12.30. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 44 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 20

children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports children with special educational needs.

The playgroup employs six staff. Three of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned routines such as hand washing and being encouraged to use tissues when they need them. Staff practise some hygiene routines such as wiping the tables before children use them for snacks. However not all toys and equipment are clean and the area for preparation of food is not hygienic. This compromises children's health. Good procedures are in place for sick and infectious children which help prevent the spread of infection and help to keep children healthy.

Children benefit from healthy snacks, for example they eat fresh fruit, toast and vegetable sticks. Drinks are offered regularly throughout the session and children can access fresh water when they are thirsty. All snacks comply with any special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy. Staff work in partnership with parents to meet children's dietary needs. Children are learning about healthy living through discussion with staff and planned topics such as 'Healthy Eating.'

Children enjoy some physical exercise, they join in well with action songs and musical games. However, staff do not plan a suitable range of physical and outdoor play experiences for children. Older children are not always challenged because staff do not plan activities to promote specific physical skills. Therefore, this limits children's physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an indoor environment, where risks to children are limited through safety and security procedures. Staff monitor access to the group at all times and good procedures for the collection of children are in place. They also ensure only staff that are suitably vetted work with children in an unsupervised capacity. Comprehensive risk assessments are completed and daily checks on the premises and equipment are made to ensure children are kept safe. However, the outdoor gate is not always locked when children are outside and this compromises children's safety. Children are well supervised and staff ensure that adult to child ratios are maintained at all times. Fire evacuation procedures are fully understood by staff although these are not practised regularly, consequently, children are not familiar with the procedure and their safety is at risk.

Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe, for example they

understand that they must pick up toys from the floor in case they trip. They know that they must stand back from the door when it is opened to avoid injury. Children have free access to a good range of safe toys and equipment, which, helps to keep them safe. Children build on their natural curiosity as learners and use equipment safely and imaginatively.

Children are well-protected by staff that have a clear understanding of child protection issues. Staff know likely signs of abuse and are aware of the need to share what they know or have seen with senior members of staff. A written child protection policy re-enforces the correct procedures to follow.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the group confidently and enjoy their time in the setting. An effective key worker system ensures that children are cared for by consistent staff, whenever possible. Children enjoy the positive interaction with staff which increases their sense of trust and well-being. They benefit from familiar routines which are well organised by staff, who are very attentive to children's needs. Children enjoy a wide range of interesting experiences and activities to help them learn through their play. For example, children play imaginatively in the home corner and enjoy listening to stories each day. Staff are beginning to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan a good range of activities for children under three years. Staff conduct detailed observations and assessments to help plan for young children's next steps in learning.

Children play happily together and with adults, using resources such as puzzles, making models and role play equipment. Musical activities include singing and action rhymes which contribute to children's developing communication skills. Exploration with paint, dough, sand and water helps children represent their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a suitable knowledge and understanding of how children learn and use the stepping stones to clearly identify children's achievements. Planning is satisfactory, it links to the stepping stones and ensures a range of activities and experiences are provided to extend children's learning. Observations and assessments are undertaken and staff are beginning to use these to inform planning for children's next steps in learning. Staff engage in children's play and challenge children by good use of questioning to extend children's learning. Behaviour is well managed and this results in a calm and caring environment for children.

Children are eager and motivated to learn, they form good relationships with staff and their peers which helps promote their sense of well-being. Children are developing their independence through participation in routine activities such as self selecting their toys and activities and putting on their own coats. Children are fluent speakers

and initiate and continue conversations with others, however there are few opportunities for children to speak out in a familiar group. This means their confidence is not fully promoted. Children listen to stories and sing their favourite songs and rhymes. They show good interest in books, and handle them well. However there are limited opportunities for children to learn that print carries meaning, through seeing words in the environment to help them begin to recognise familiar words. They have good opportunities to practise their emergent writing skills and some children are beginning to write their own name. However staff do not encourage children to hear and say initial sounds in words and this means their learning of how to link sounds with letters is limited. Children are beginning to count and use numbers well. They count reliably to 10 and they have opportunities to develop simple calculation skills through number rhymes such as 'Five Currant Buns.' However there are few numbers used in the environment to help children recognise numerals.

Children are interested in the environment and are provided with a variety of activities which enable them to explore their surroundings for example growing seeds and looking at insects. They develop exploration and investigation skills as they learn about how water freezes and how ice melts. Children have some opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) through use of a computer, however this is not regularly planned into the curriculum. This means that not all children have regular access to develop these skills.

Children move confidently and are developing good coordination skills, they handle a range of tools and small equipment well. However, the provision for physical play does not provide sufficient challenge for older children. Children enjoy making models with play dough and recycled materials, for example, they make models of the 'Three Little Pigs' houses using a variety of materials. Their imagination is well developed as they play in the role play area, which is changed frequently to extend children's play and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy positive relationships with the staff and with each other. All children are valued and respected as individuals. They receive individual attention and support when needed. Children with special needs are welcomed into the setting and staff work with other agencies to ensure children's individual needs are met. Children's confidence and self-esteem is developed by staff with the good use of praise and encouragement. This is promoted further by rewards of stickers and having their name put on a good behaviour chart. Children are involved in making choices about their play, they have free choice of toys and activities which fosters their independence.

Children behave well in response to clear boundaries set by staff. Children are learning to share and take turns with equipment, for example they share the construction toys and home corner equipment. Children and staff sit together at snack times to develop children's social skills. They are encouraged to help each

other and to use their manners well. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Resources positively represent individuals from other cultures, this helps children develop a positive attitude to others. However there are few resources that reflect people with special needs which limits children's understanding of diversity.

All children benefit from the positive relationships staff have developed with parents. Children settle well because the staff work closely with parents to ensure their child's needs are met. Parents receive written information on how the setting operates in a detailed operational plan. They are invited to give their views on a regular basis through ongoing discussion and by joining the committee. The partnership with parents who receive nursery education funding is satisfactory. They receive information on the educational programme provided for their children through, the curriculum plans being displayed and regular newsletters. Children benefit from a two way sharing of information between parents and staff to enhance their learning. Parents are invited to parents meetings to discuss their child's progress. The consistency is further advanced by daily verbal feedback to ensure parents are informed about what their children have been doing whilst attending.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a familiar routine and are comfortable and at ease in the setting. They are confident to approach staff to ask questions and request support. Children can freely access a variety of activities and resources which helps develop their independence skills. However space and resources are not always well organised which sometimes limits children's play and learning.

There are effective recruitment procedures which ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and there is a satisfactory level of qualified staff who work with the children. There is an appropriate ratio of staff to children to offer good support to children. There are clear systems in place for recording accidents, medication and attendance records. Detailed policies and procedures work well in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare.

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the 'Curriculum Guidance for the foundation stage' which helps to deliver a suitable educational programme for over three's. A system of observation and assessment is in place, and staff are beginning to use these to inform planning for the next steps of children's learning. Staff work efficiently together as a team and there is a supportive management structure in place. The manager takes an active part in the setting. However there is no clear system in place to monitor and evaluate the educational provision to ensure the curriculum is delivered effectively. This restricts children's progress. Staff are supported with regular meetings, ongoing training and appraisals. Consequently, the leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to make changes to the child protection policy and the complaints procedure. To address these issues the setting has reviewed the policies and procedures and made the necessary amendments. This means that suitable policies and procedures are now in place to promote the care and welfare of the children.

Nursery education.

At the last inspection the provider was asked to; improve staff's understanding of the foundation stage, to improve the curriculum planning, to implement an assessment procedure to monitor children's progress, to increase the opportunities for children to develop an understanding of simple calculations and to improve the provision of information to parents regarding their children's development.

To address these key issues the setting now have regular planning meetings to plan the topics and activities around the six areas of learning. The stepping stones are identified and discussed. This means that staff are now more familiar with the foundation stage. The setting has also been working with staff from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership to develop their curriculum plans. Staff now complete observations and assessments of the children to monitor their progress through the stepping stones. They are beginning to use these assessments to inform their planning for children's next steps in learning. This ensures planning is linked to the children's educational needs.

Staff now plan more opportunities for children to develop their understanding of calculation, for example staff encourage children to count and introduce simple addition and subtraction into everyday activities. Children also learn simple addition and subtraction through the use of number rhymes such as 'Five Currant Buns.' Parents are now provided with regular information regarding their child's development. Staff give daily verbal feedback to parents and they invite parents into the setting for 'parents afternoon' to discuss their child's developmental records with their child's key worker. Parents know they can access these records at anytime. This ensures that parents are kept informed of their children's progress.

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):

- ensure all toys and equipment are clean and that all recommendations made by the Environmental Health Agency regarding preparation and handling of food are met
- further develop the planning of physical and outdoor play to ensure all children are suitably challenged
- ensure emergency evacuations procedures are practised regularly and ensure the outdoor play area is secure at all times when children are outside
- ensure space and resources are organised to meet the children's needs effectively.

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):

- increase the opportunities for children to link sounds to letters and to speak in familiar group
- increase the opportunity for children to see print and numbers in the environment and increase the opportunities for all children to access information communication and technology (ICT) equipment.
- develop a system to monitor and evaluate the educational provision to ensure that areas for improvement are identified and addressed.

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