



Stilton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221872
Inspection date	21 February 2006
Inspector	Lesley Barrett
Setting Address	The Mobile, Church Street, Stilton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE7 3RF
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Registered person	Stilton 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 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?

Stilton Playgroup opened in 1969. It operates from two adjoining mobile buildings within the grounds of Stilton Primary School. The group serves the local, rural community. A maximum of 25 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens each weekday morning from 09:00 hours until 11:45 hours for children in their pre-school year. Afternoon sessions Monday to Thursday are offered to children from the age of 2 years 9 months.

There are currently 34 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these 27 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school is able to support children with special educational needs or those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 4 staff. Over half of the staff, including the supervisor hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting is supported by a curriculum advisor and development worker from the Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment. Staff have a clear understanding of the need to prevent cross contamination, through sound policies and good practice. For example, prior to preparing the children's snack, they tie their long hair back and wash their hands thoroughly. Children are able to experience a range of activities which contribute to their good health. They are gaining an understanding of good hygiene practices through clear support and guidance from staff, such as hand washing before eating and after toileting. They are encouraged to wipe their own noses and dispose of the tissues appropriately.

Children are benefiting from a range of healthy snacks, such as fruit and raw vegetables to promote their good health. They are provided with a choice of milk, juice or water to drink at snack time and a water dispenser has recently been acquired to allow children to help themselves to a drink. Children's special dietary requirements are considered when providing snacks and notices remind staff of each child's needs to ensure that their individual dietary requirements are met.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills both when using large and small apparatus, tools and equipment. They are developing their fine muscle skills as they use a range of equipment, such as scissors, threading, play dough tools and through building with various sized bricks. Children are provided with opportunities to experience physical activities inside on a daily basis. For example, there is a climbing frame where children can climb up a rope ladder or wooden rungs and use a slide. Weather permitting due to the safety of the outdoor play area, children are able to use ride on toys, balance on scooters and play catch.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for within two mobile classrooms which are interlinked. Effective layout of the rooms and constant supervision of children, minimises risks to children, as they are able to move around safely and freely between the two rooms, choosing where they would like to play. Resources are well organised and effectively stored allowing children easy access to the equipment helping to increase their

independence.

Children's safety is protected as the premises are kept secure, to prevent unauthorised entry or a child leaving unsupervised. Regular fire drills are carried out helping children and staff learn about the importance of the procedures to be followed in an emergency. Risks assessments are carried out on the premises inside and within the outdoor play area prior to the children playing outside. However, to ensure children's safety, staff prevent children from using this area during poor weather as there are aspects which make it unsafe when wet. Consequently, opportunities for children to experience outdoor play during all weather's are limited. Children are learning about the importance of keeping themselves safe as staff talk to them calmly about the correct way of carrying chairs, why they should not run inside and why they should not go in to the kitchen.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded, as parents complete paperwork which would allow staff to act quickly if a child becomes ill or there is a medical emergency. Children are never released to an adult unless they have prior written consent from the parents. An effective child protection policy is in place which ensures children's safety and well-being are the main concerns of the group. Staff have attended child protection training and are aware of the procedures to be followed should they have any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and confident. They show a good bond with staff who are consistently warm and kind in their approach. They recognise the needs of younger children who are settling and provide a range of stimulating and interesting activities to meet their needs. These are adapted and changed frequently to maintain children's interest and give them a sense of achievement. The session for younger children is planned effectively, staff are aware that they have a shorter attention span and therefore do not expect them to sit for sustained periods, such as at snack or story time. This helps to maintain children's attention and prevents disruptive behaviour. Staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, they plan to attend training to develop their knowledge within this area to benefit the children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and present a range of interesting activities to promote children's learning. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the way children learn, they are flexible which ensures that children are interested, willing and eager to participate. They recognise opportunities for extending children's learning and ask questions to provide challenge, successfully enabling children to think and predict for themselves during activities and general conversation. Daily plans are detailed and link to the early learning goals. Key activity planners, cover all six areas of the curriculum, thus ensuring that children are able to participate in a range of activities to support their learning. When children start at the playgroup their parents are asked to complete a 'I

can do' booklet with them which provides staff with a starting point for children's learning. Staff then observe and monitor children's play in order to identify gaps in children's learning and address as necessary. Children's next steps for learning are addressed each term and used to develop future planning.

Children relate well to each other and adults confidently expressing their ideas. They are independent in their self care, as they take themselves to the toilet and learn to put on their coats. They are aware of their own needs and those of others, for example, an older child recognises that a younger child needs help in removing his art apron. They are able to make choices in their play and staff recognise when they have lost interest in an activity and encourage them to choose something different. However, children are not involved in the preparation and serving of snacks which limits their opportunities to develop independence skills within this area.

Many children are confident speakers and engage easily in conversations with each other and adults. They use language to communicate their ideas and share information from home and about their favourite toy particularly during calendar time. They talk confidently to staff who respond appropriately to develop their thinking skills. For example, a child who has made a play dough birthday cake, is asked 'whose birthday it is?' 'how old they are?' and 'how many candles are needed?'. During the story of 'There was an old woman who swallowed a fly', children recognise rhyming words and staff encourage them to think of similar words. Information displayed around the room, such as on storage boxes for toys, helps children to recognise that print has meaning. They enjoy looking at books and comics alone and with friends. Opportunities to draw and paint are provided through planned activities. However, opportunities for children to participate in spontaneous mark making activities, such as role play and within a freely accessed mark making area are limited. This does not allow children to fully develop their skills within this area.

Through spontaneous and planned activities children are beginning to see connections and relationships in numbers, shape and measures. For example, through a planned activity of sorting beads and threading, a member of staff asks a child 'how many beads they need to find?' 'how many they have?' and 'how many more they need to make 5?'. During sand play a member of staff asks 'how many small cups it takes to fill a large bottle with sand?' and wall displays show that children have measured how tall they are and used their own hands prints to record this. Children learn about the environment and the natural world through an interesting range of planned and spontaneous activities. Visitors further support children's learning such as, the local fire brigade and a visit from Hammerton Zoo. There are regular opportunities for children to use technology, which underpins learning in other areas. Children build and construct using a range of objects and tools, such as duplo, brio train track and magnetic blocks.

Children are able to be creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through craft, music and imaginative play. They use their senses and imaginations to create their own work and to communicate their feelings. For example, children engage in role play based on their experiences, such as making a fresh fruit salad for tea or taking the baby to the shops. Staff successfully fire children's imagination by asking appropriate questions, they ask 'who is coming to tea?', 'what are you putting in your

fruit salad?' and 'what they are going to buy at the shops?' During craft activities, they explore different materials, textures and types of paints. They are provided with opportunities to construct their designs with various tools such as glue and different types of sticky tape.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed into the group and are valued as individuals. Their needs are effectively met as staff work closely with parents to ensure that they have relevant information enabling them to provide appropriate care for children. They are encouraged to have positive attitudes and are developing an awareness of diversity through the play resources available and celebrations of religious festivals, such as Chinese New Year. However, displays which promote positive images are limited, consequently opportunities to increase children's knowledge of the wider world are not effectively promoted.

Children's behaviour is good. They are well behaved and learning to use good manners at all times. They are aware of the need for rules and boundaries to ensure that activities are successful and that everyone has a turn. They happily help with tidying away which helps to promote good behaviour and for them to feel included in the routines of the group. Staff set consistent boundaries and use positive practices for behaviour management that are calming to children. For example, distraction and gentle guidance. They give clear explanations as to why they are asking a child not to do something and children are praised, helping to promote their self-esteem and foster their spiritual, moral and social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Positive relationships between parents and staff have formed, which benefits the children's care and learning. They receive comprehensive information about the setting and the Foundation Stage. They are welcomed into the playgroup and given opportunities to discuss their child's achievements and progress with their key worker through an open door policy. They are updated termly about their child's progress through written reports which identify the next steps of learning for their child and they have easy access to their progress records. This ensures that they are kept fully informed of their child's development and enables them to build upon their child's learning at home. They are kept well informed of the current topics and other information, through regular newsletters and a parent notice board.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children receive a good level of care from staff, who are appropriately qualified and have been subject to a vetting procedure. This along with consistency of the same staff working each day, helps to ensure that children are looked after safely by suitably qualified and experienced staff. The commitment of staff to continue their training, to ensure that they are kept up to date with current knowledge, teaching

methods and child care practices, ensures that children's developing needs are effectively met. Children also have the confidence to initiate their own activities, as good levels of adult support provides them with many opportunities to access a range of activities.

The playgroup is suitably organised as the effective layout of the premises allows children to play in different areas to maximise their play and learning opportunities. For example, there are separate areas for messy and physical play and quieter activities, such as the book corner. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed to ensure that children's continuing needs are met.

Leadership and management is good. The provision is effectively managed and monitored. The supervisor has a clear vision about how to provide a quality service to children and parents, that meets their individual needs and a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. She is a good role model for others, staff work well together as a team and are clear in their individual roles and responsibilities within the setting. Appraisal and regular informal chats enable staff to identify their strengths and weaknesses, to ensure that the continuing needs of all children can be met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection the group received one action which related to documentation which had been met and has a positive impact on the safety of children.

They received six recommendations, three of these related to documentation all of which have been addressed and have a positive impact on the care of children and the organisation of the group. Of the other three, one related to risk assessments which are now carried out and have a positive impact on the safety of children. One related to providing healthy snacks and drinks for children which has been addressed to promote children's good health. The final recommendation related to behaviour management which has been addressed to ensure that staff are consistent when giving messages to children to promote good behaviour. This has a positive impact on allowing children to make a positive contribution.

Following the last Nursery Education inspection, the group were asked to develop the programme for communication, language and literacy and mathematics. This has been addressed and have a positive impact on children's learning in these areas. They were asked to develop planning to identify next steps for children's learning. This has been successfully addressed and has a positive impact on children's progress. They were also required to develop a system for informing parents of children's progress and the next steps for their child's learning. A system has been implemented to ensure that parents are kept fully informed about their child's development.

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 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 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 that children can play safely in the outdoor play area at all times
- consider how the promotion of equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice can be further developed

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 opportunities for children to become involved in the preparation and serving of snacks to encourage their independence skills
- develop the range of opportunities for children to participate in spontaneous mark making activities.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk