



Slip End Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219242
Inspection date	16 May 2006
Inspector	Susan Tuffnell
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Registered person	Slip End 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

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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?

Slip End Playgroup was registered in 1992. It operates in Slip End Village Hall which comprises a large hall, adjacent kitchen area and toilets. There is a public play area outside which is also used. The playgroup cares for a maximum of 24 children aged 2-5 years, on Monday, Tuesday and Friday mornings, from 09:30 to 12:30 during the school term. The group is run by a committee made up of parents and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through daily routines. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before snacks. However, children are restless and bored as they wait for others to return from the toilets and the younger children seem confused when asked more than once if they have washed their hands which resulted in a long wait for snack time to begin. The children are protected from infection through the well managed procedures that are practiced by the group and the standard of cleanliness of the premises and equipment. Extra care is taken by staff before the children access the public playground to ensure it meets all health and safety requirements. Consistent attention is shown to the care of children through planning where all activities are risk assessed at the point of planning. Practitioners are well informed about the children's health and suitable documentation is in place to support this. All required consents are in place from parents. Accidents are documented to ensure a satisfactory record is kept and shared with parents. A high level of staff hold a current first aid certificate to ensure any accidents to the children are dealt with appropriately.

Children enjoy a good range of physical activities which contribute to a healthy life style. They confidently use their physical skills to access a range of large and small equipment. Staff ensure children experience a variety of ways to move their bodies as they climb, balance, jump and learn to pedal bikes. Activities stimulate the children to try new movements and effective equipment is provided for the children to challenge their physical skills such as the trampoline, balance beams and climbing frame. Children's dexterity and hand and eye coordination is developing as they manipulate small objects such as play dough and construction materials.

Children sit together on the floor at snack time. Two designated children serve snacks to the others. However, children do not have opportunities to practise table manners or social skills as they eat fruit and biscuits without the use of a plate. Children take part in some food preparation such as fruit cutting. They explore cabbage leaves and sort out the leaves in sizes. Everyday snacks consist of biscuits or fruit and children can choose between milk or water. Children are not able to freely access drinking water throughout the session and this impacts of their ability to make decisions, be independent and pour their own drinks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety is important to the organisation of the group. Practitioners recognise hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. The setting is planned with safety in mind allowing space for children to move freely and safely around activities. Suitable safety and security precautions are in place to promote and safeguard the children's welfare. For example, doors are locked after children arrive and a closed circuit television camera alerts staff to visitors at the door. However, there is no

visitors signing-in book, A daily health and safety check is done by staff to ensure the children can play in a safe environment. Children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe as they practise simple procedures such as emergency evacuation. Children are encouraged to practise suitable safety measures such as waiting a turn and lining up to use the climbing frame. Children respond to the boundaries. Practitioners endorse these by explaining to the children in a simple but positive manner about safety. For example, putting down toys before using the climbing frame so they have two hands to hold the rails. The outside area is a shared public park which is fully enclosed and checked for safety by staff before children are able to access it.

Children use an appropriate range of safe, well maintained and developmentally appropriate resources. Children learn to use the equipment responsibly as they help tidy up toys and work together to roll up safety mats. Planned equipment and activities are set out on table and floors for children to access. However, children do not have free access to a wide variety of play materials and equipment to encourage child-initiated play.

Effective recording of incidents and a satisfactory child protection policy and procedure ensure that children are well protected. Practitioners are knowledgeable about child protection and have attended further training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, settled and secure. They have a sense of belonging as they come into the playgroup and know the routine. Children relate well to each other and socialise together seeking out friends to share activities. Most children spend their time in a purposeful manner as they move freely around the activities throughout the session. They sing familiar songs with enthusiasm and join in with group action rhythms and games. For example, the children enjoy using their bodies to link movement with songs. They explore familiar experiences in the home corner and show creative skills as they manipulate play dough and construct road and rail tracks. The role play areas are clearly defined and displayed in an attractive manner to encourage the children to use their imagination. The book corner is inviting, however children did not access this area very often. Most children are able to concentrate and persevere at activities. Practitioners support and engage children in tasks and where children sit with staff at activities lively conversation takes place. However, children have limited opportunity to share their news with their peers or practise public speaking to increase their confidence and self-esteem in a group situation. Younger children are supported by staff to help them settle into routines and are given help and encouragement as they participate in activities.

Practitioners are adept at extending activities so children gain maximum benefit from them. Children are able to observe the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly using real life caterpillars in cocoons and watch them change in a specially designed container. Children gain knowledge as they feed and look after the caterpillars and extend the experience with linked activities. For example, the children enjoy stories

and creative activities about mini beasts. Children take part in interesting activities such as peeling a cabbage and focus on the feel, smell and shape of the leaves. They make "cabbage pies and parcels" with the leaves and sort them into different sizes. Staff have a sound understanding of the children's individual needs and capabilities and are able to adapt activities to meet the needs of the younger children. They use the 'Birth to Three Matters' framework in planning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Children are generally making progress due to the practitioners' knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn effectively. Medium and weekly plans are comprehensive and show interesting activities which challenge and stimulate most children. As a result most children are motivated and make positive links in their learning. However, long term plans that cover three terms show minimum detail. The learning environment and activities are planned to provide a satisfactory balanced range of activities across the six areas of learning and are suited to the needs of all the children and reflect the community of children from the wider world. However, children do not have many opportunities to freely self-select and initiate play from the activities and equipment chosen and displayed by staff and the poor organisation of the group at snack time results in the children being bored.

Children make satisfactory progress from their identified starting points. Staff monitor children's progress and use the stepping stones to record this. Assessment folders identify children's achievements in order to plan for the next steps in their learning. However, children's progress is limited in some areas of learning for example, information technology.

Children use their imagination well as they take part in role play and creative activities. They enjoy exploring and investigating how things grow and change as they observe the different stages of caterpillars and tadpoles. Staff read stories enthusiastically to the children who join in and participate, thoroughly enjoying the session. Children are able to recognise their own names on cards and are learning the sounds of letters in their names. However this could be extended with labels on everyday objects around the room to further children's recognition of words relating to objects. Children have opportunity to write and make marks and this is extended into meaningful situations such as shopping and role play. Children are beginning to count and use mathematical language in play. However, there is no designated maths area to allow children to explore shape, size, volume and colour of objects freely and limited visual displays of numbers.

Children explore and investigate natural objects through practical play with construction and creative techniques. For example, they collect leaves, twigs and conkers as they enjoy a woodland walk to create an autumn collage. Their work is praised and valued as they use their own ideas and imagination. However, children's work is not displayed around the room to enhance their self-esteem and confidence and give them pride in their achievements. Children do not have opportunities to experience information technology, use a computer and look closely at how things work. This restricts children's natural curiosity about the world they live in.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity. They take part in some activities to gain an awareness and enjoyment of both familiar and unfamiliar festivals and celebrations, for example Christmas, Easter and Diwali. Practitioners have positive attitudes and present themselves as good role models, which in turn helps children relate to others in a positive way. Children are learning to share and take turns and respond well to direction from adults. For example, children form an orderly line at the climbing frame and take turns on the bikes. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Effective systems are in place to support children with special educational needs however, the policy and procedure does not include the wider aspect of children who have a special need.

Children have a good awareness of the boundaries within the pre-school. They respond well to the consistent approach followed by staff and this impacts clearly on children's security and confidence as they know what is expected of them. Children develop self-esteem as they are able to resolve differences and learn to compromise and accept the needs of others.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. However, there is no information about the planning of the foundation stage displayed for parents and there is little opportunity for parents to access their children's assessment files freely. Staff are available at the end of the session to discuss children's achievements with parents and there is an opportunity for parents to visit during session time to talk to the key worker. Parents gain some information from the newsletters which are produced each half term. The parents folder contains the groups policies but no information about the daily organisation of the group, staff, routines and activities. Parents are not fully encouraged to play an active role in their children's learning through lack of information and sharing of activities between home and pre-school. More detailed information about the curriculum would help staff and parents work together to enhance the children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Records, documentation, policies and procedures are in place and implemented to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. However, many of the records are not kept on the premises which inhibits the effectiveness of the organisation. Staff are able to access additional training to further enhance their skills but this is not linked with the professional development of the staff through supervision and appraisals to access the staff's weaknesses and strengths. An induction process is in place for new staff and students to ensure they fully understand all their roles and responsibilities. All relevant information is gained about each child and this is used to find a starting point for children's learning, care and development.

Leadership and Management is satisfactory. The supervisor and the chairperson place a strong emphasis on developing a committed staff team who work well together and provide stimulating and challenging experiences for the children. However, suitable systems to fully evaluate, monitor and access every aspect of the organisation are not in place and this impacts on the quality and effectiveness of the provision and the children's overall care and learning. Practitioners promote an inclusive environment where each child is important and they organise time, staff, activities, resources and space to ensure children benefit from their time spent with the group. Overall the needs of the children attending are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to encourage children to learn good hygiene practice by promoting hand washing before snacks. Ensure the temperature of the premises is monitored e.g. by use of a thermometer. Implement a policy for dealing effectively with lost children and implement a policy or procedure to cover outings and trips. Hand washing is carried out before snacks and the temperature of the premises is now monitored and recorded. A policy has been devised for lost and left children and a policy and procedure is in place to cover outings and trips.

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.

A complaint was received and investigated by Ofsted on the 16/05/2006. As a result of this the playgroup were given four actions as follows:-

Standard 13. Update the child protection policy and procedure with the Area Child Protection Committee Procedures (ACPC) and the government booklet 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused'.

Standard 14. Ensure that the records are always available for inspection by the early years child care inspector.

Standard 9. Ensure that the admissions policy contains a statement on equal opportunities.

Standard 6. Take positive steps to promote safety within the setting and ensure proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

The playgroup remains qualified for registration.

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):

- organise snack time to ensure that children have opportunities to practise table manners, social skills and independence and ensure that children have free access to fresh drinking water at all times
- provide a visitors book and ensure that times of arrival and departure are recorded
- ensure that children have opportunities to share their news with peers at group time
- provide parents with detailed information and planning on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the foundation stage of learning
- include information on the wider aspects of children with special needs in the policy
- Increase opportunities for children to have free access to a wide variety of play materials and equipment to encourage child-initiated play and create an environment rich in visual displays to stimulate and interest children
- ensure that required records are in place and on the premises which includes staff information about the vetting procedure, recruitment, training and qualifications.

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):

- develop effective planning in all areas of development of the foundation stage of learning and ensure that planning challenges children's learning
- improve information to parents on children's progress and achievements
- develop suitable systems to fully evaluate and monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and the staff

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