



The Village Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315959
Inspection date	02 May 2006
Inspector	Susan Janet Lee
Setting Address	Mytham Road, Little Lever, Bolton, Lancashire, BL3 1JF
Telephone number	01204 573 096
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Registered person	The Village Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good. 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?

The Village Pre-School Playgroup was first registered in 1980. It operates from the community centre in Little Lever, Bolton. The setting is run by a committee.

The provision is open Monday from 12:45 until 15:00, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 09:15 until 15:00 and Friday from 09:15 until 11:45 during term time. Children have access to a large open plan play area, bathroom facilities and an outdoor play area. There is a kitchen available for staff to prepare drinks and snacks.

The facility is registered to provide care for a maximum of 30 children at any one time. There are currently 66 children on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and are also able to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The provision employs four paid members of staff, all of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting also has five volunteers, three of whom hold an appropriate qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well maintained environment. Staff exercise good hygiene practices to minimise the risk of cross infection. Children develop an awareness of personal care routines as they wash their hands at appropriate times of the day. A clear sick children's policy and staff's good awareness of childhood illnesses and exclusion periods helps to protect children from infection.

Children's dietary needs are successfully met as staff gather information from parents about their dietary requirements and take this information into account when planning snacks. Staff provide healthy options at snack time. For example, toast, fruit and vegetable sticks; helping to aid children's growth and development. Snack time is a relaxed, social occasion where children are able to sit together, eat at their own pace and chat to their friends. Children have drinks at regular intervals; however, fresh drinking water is not readily accessible for them to access independently to quench their thirst. Children develop an awareness of general well-being as they know that we eat food to stop us feeling hungry. They learn about healthy eating through discussion with staff and food tasting sessions.

Children have lots of opportunities to enjoy and develop their physical skills as they have access to a range of resources to help them develop their large gross motor skills on a daily basis. For example, they are able to ride bikes and scooters, use the climbing frame and slide, twist hoops around their waist and balance on stepping stones; all of which contributes to their good health and physical development. Older children develop more complicated movements such as hopping on one leg. The children are able to move backwards as well as forwards and they are able to negotiate pathways around equipment and other children. They develop good fine manipulative skills and hand and eye co-ordination as they use tools such as pencils, rolling pins, glue spreaders and small world resources.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment. Children's art work is attractively displayed on the walls. There is lots of space available for the children to

move around and play in comfort. Staff organise space well to accommodate separate active and more quiet activities. There is a good selection of furniture available to allow the children to play, rest and eat in comfort. The setting provides a wide range of resources to help children progress in all areas of their development. Staff check and clean equipment and resources on a regular basis to minimise risks to children.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place. Staff have a good awareness of safety and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that the environment in which children are cared for is safe and secure. Emergency evacuation is practiced on a regular basis with the children ensuring they have an awareness of what to do in the event of an emergency such as a fire. The children develop an awareness of safety as they learn about the boundaries through observing staff role models and discussion.

All appropriate policies and procedures are in place. Staff have a clear understanding of possible signs of abuse and are familiar with procedures to follow should they have any concerns, helping to safeguard children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff set up activities to look interesting and inviting. Children have access to a wide range of age appropriate and stimulating activities. For example, a range of creative resources, a home corner, a book area, puzzles, construction materials, small world resources and large physical play equipment. Children are actively involved and occupied.

Play plans are well balanced; however, the deputy has only recently attended the introduction to the Birth to three matters frame work training, consequently, the aspects of the frame work are not yet used in planning activities for children under three years. Staff observe younger children at play but they do not record this information to chart their progress.

Staff deploy themselves well to enable them to offer good care and support to the children. They sit with the children as they play and they take an interest in what the children do and say. Staff share warm relationships with the children, who are happy, confident and settled in their care.

Children are able to access toys freely to extend their play, enabling them to initiate their own ideas and to develop choice and independence. A child plays with farm animals in the small world play area, they access Duplo bricks to build a farm house.

The children enjoy lots of creative activities. They are able to paint, model with play dough and make collage pictures. Children explore the texture of the different mediums. For example, a child spreads glue all over the paper, spreads it horizontally and then vertically. Another child manipulates play dough in the palms of their hands and then makes patterns in it using their fingers.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Staff have an awareness of the Foundation Stage and provide appropriate activities to help children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Staff build up an understanding of what children can do through observation. There are currently no systems in place for gathering such information from parents when their children begin. Play plans include a balance of the aspects of the early learning goals. Staff observe the children during play and use this information to chart their progress and also to inform planning. Staff are aware of the learning intentions of focussed activities. They ask the children appropriate questions and use props such as photographs to engage the children. However, on some occasions during adult initiated activities, children soon lose interest.

On arrival, children happily separate from their carer and are eager to choose an activity and play with their friends. The children display levels of involvement in their chosen activities. They are confident to express their needs. For example, a child tells a member of staff that their shoe lace is undone. The children develop their self help skills as they put on dressing up clothes, help to tidy up, independently use the bathroom and wash their hands with adult support. Children show emerging confidence to speak to others about their wants and interests and use talk to explain what is happening and to anticipate what will happen next. For example, a child builds a tower and advises staff that their tower is going to fall down. Children enjoy using the book area. They listen to and join in stories, they handle the books with care and turn the pages appropriately. Children begin to ascribe meaning to mark making as they paint and chalk. They engage in activities requiring hand eye co-ordination and begin to form recognisable letters. Older children begin to write their names. The writing area was not used much by the children during the visit. There are some opportunities for children to use writing for a purpose in role play situations.

Children learn about mathematical concepts in play activities such as baking, construction, stories and circle time. They develop counting skills as they count the dinosaurs whilst looking at a book. There are some opportunities for children to use problem solving to calculate, for example when singing; however, these opportunities are limited. The children use positional language well and use descriptions such as "on top of" and "next to" during their play. Children begin to recognise shapes and are able to match shape by orientation when completing puzzles. They show sustained interest in construction activities; a child builds a model lower and wider to prevent it from falling down.

The children have opportunities to develop a sense of place and become aware of the wider world as they explore different textures and look at different features of their surroundings. For example, they talk about animals and their habitat and compare them to where they live. Children have lots of fun investigating construction materials and they join them together to make models. Information and communication technology resources are available to the children and they are able to operate simple equipment. The children develop a sense of time as they follow the setting's daily routine and recall significant events in their life.

The children enjoy singing at circle time and show an interest in the sounds that musical instruments make. They have access to a range of creative media and are able to express their own thoughts and ideas as they create pictures. A good range of imaginative resources are available and children are able to extend their imagination and understanding of the world as they re-enact their own experiences. They are able to further extend their imaginative play into the large physical area as they take their dolls for a walk in the buggy and visit the café. Good use is made of the small world resources where children play alongside each other engaged in the same theme.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff gather information from parents about their children's needs to enable them to be in a position to best meet these needs. Children learn about the wider world as they have access to a wide range of resources that reflect diversity. They also celebrate their own and other festivals to help them value each other's similarities and differences. For example, when the children celebrated Chinese New Year they tasted Chinese food using chop sticks and they dressed up in traditional Chinese costume. Staff work very well in partnership with parents and other professionals to support children with additional needs.

Staff have a good awareness of the behaviour management policy. They set good role models to the children. For example, they treat the children with care and concern, use please and thank you and encourage the children to share. As a result, children are polite and begin to develop an awareness of what is expected of them; the children remind each other they have to share the toys. Staff praise children's efforts and achievements and they use a "little stars chart" where they record and display children's achievements; this gives the children a sense of achievement and develops their confidence and self-esteem.

The children develop a good sense of belonging. On arrival, they enter with ease and confidence, take off their coats and go happily to play with their friends. The children are made to feel special. For example, their birthdays are celebrated. Staff encourage the children to take responsibility as they help to tidy up. The children are able to make choices and decisions as they freely choose what they want to play with. Older children show care and concern for younger children. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Staff share good working relationships with parents who are greeted warmly on arrival. A notice board is displayed and regular newsletters keep parents informed about forthcoming events. Parents comment that they are happy with the service provided, levels of care and activities afforded. The partnership with parents of children in receipt of nursery education is satisfactory. A booklet regarding what children can do is available but this is not currently being used effectively to gather information from parents about their children's starting points. Staff share verbal information relating to nursery education with parents; however, there is no detailed written information available to parents. Staff are working hard to try to establish a

way to share information with parents about their children's progress. Children's assessment records are available to parents; however, at the moment, there is no formal system in place to keep parents informed about their children's progress. Parents are involved in the setting's activities as some parents are regular volunteers and spend time helping with activities and working with staff and the children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

An effective vetting procedure ensures children are protected. Staff have regard for children's well-being as they attend training to further develop their childcare practice. Four staff have valid first aid certificates ensuring they have up to date knowledge of what to do in the event of an accident or minor injury.

The induction procedure works well to enable staff to have an awareness of their roles and responsibilities. However, there is no formal process in place for staff appraisals. The record of children's attendance shows that staff ratios are maintained to promote children's care. The staff work well together as a team and organise space, time and resources well to meet children's needs. The management team are aware of the importance of and are planning to implement a key worker system soon.

All appropriate policies and procedures are in place and work in practice to promote children's health, safety and welfare. All required documentation is in place.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory.

The manager and deputy have a satisfactory understanding of the Foundation Stage and support staff appropriately as they work alongside them in the delivery of the curriculum on a daily basis. The manager and staff monitor the provision of nursery education by evaluating activities and having regular staff meetings. The manager is aware of the areas for development in relation to nursery education and she is currently working with the staff to make the necessary improvements.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection recommendations were agreed in relation to staff's awareness of child protection issues and policies and procedures.

Staff have developed their understanding of child protection matters, helping to protect children. The child protection procedure now includes procedures regarding allegations being made against staff and the behaviour policy refers to anti-bullying.

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):

- ensure that fresh drinking water is readily accessible to the children
- improve the outcomes for children under three by using an approach in line with Birth to three matters and begin to record observations of what younger children do in readiness for full day care provision
- develop a formal process for the appraisal/supervision of staff (also applies to nursery education).

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 teaching practices to ensure that staff engage children more in adult initiated activities and that they provide more learning opportunities
- further develop the writing area to encourage the children to use it, increase opportunities for children to learn that we write for a purpose and further develop opportunities to encourage children to use problem solving skills to calculate
- provide parents with more written information about nursery education, develop systems for gathering information about children's starting points from parents and also for sharing information with parents about their children's progress.

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