



Northleach Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101531
Inspection date	03 May 2006
Inspector	Miriam Sheila Brown
Setting Address	School House, Mill End, Northleach, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL54 3HJ
Telephone number	01451 860019
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Registered person	Northleach 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 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?

Northleach Playgroup was established in 1992 and operates from the Old School House which is part of the primary school site. Northleach is a rural village to the south-east of Cheltenham and children from the village and surrounding areas attend the group. Children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area with the school. They also have use of the school swimming pool during the summer term.

A maximum of 13 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are

currently 20 children on the roll and of these, 17 children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup is open each weekday morning between 09.00 and 12.00 during term times.

The playgroup employs two staff who work with the children. The playleader holds an appropriate early years qualification. The deputy is working towards an appropriate qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene as they are encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating and after messy play. They talk about why they should keep their hands clean and manage their own personal care well, for example, one child speaking to another, insists that she has to get past him so she can wash her hands after using the toilet. Staff maintain accident and medication records effectively and have received first aid training, helping to ensure that children are cared for appropriately if they have an accident or become unwell. Children are provided with good role models by staff who pay close attention to basic hygiene practices such as wiping tables with anti-bacterial spray prior to eating.

Snack times are very pleasant social occasions when children sit together and learn social skills such as saying 'please' and 'thank you' and passing plates of food to each other. A variety of foods are offered at snack times, which provide healthy food options for children, for example, cucumber slices, carrot sticks, apple and toast. Children choose and pour their drinks at snack time but these are not currently freely available throughout each session. Children's dietary requirements are clearly documented and individual needs met effectively.

Children's physical development is very well supported, through a wide range of planned activities which assist in their small and large muscle development. They play outside each day using wheeled toys and other equipment such as ribbons and balls. They enjoy regular walks in the local area and in the summer term they use the school swimming pool. Inside they enjoy many activities, which support their small muscle development, such as, small construction, painting, threading, cutting, drawing and dough play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents are warmly welcomed to the playgroup and staff prepare rooms prior to children's arrival to enable them to go straight to their chosen activity. The premises are clean, warm and generally well maintained. Children have sole use of the premises during playgroup hours, and share outside play areas with the adjoining school.

Furniture, toys and equipment are in good repair and are checked daily for damage. There are sufficient resources to ensure children are comfortable and can play and eat together, developing their social skills and helping them to make choices. Staff rotate toys and activities according to plans for the day, helping to ensure that children enjoy a varied range of experiences. Throughout this rotation staff now provide children with opportunities to make better use of books, and mark-making materials, and resources are clearly labelled with print and pictures, assisting children in their decision making.

Children's safety is now appropriately maintained and proper precautions are taken to promote safety within the premises. For example, doors to the premises are bolted after children's arrival, they are supervised at all times, and adults in contact with the children are all in receipt of appropriate clearance. However, emergency evacuation procedures are not practised with sufficient regularity to ensure children's safety in an emergency situation. Children play outside using the school playgrounds and are supervised at all times. They learn about keeping safe on the roads whilst enjoying visits from the road safety unit. This is further enhanced when they walk to the local village, and put into practice what they have learnt.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by good staff awareness of child protection procedures. The group policy outlines their approach to any concerns and is displayed for parents, staff and rota helpers information.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children take part in a varied range of activities throughout each session. Younger children are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other and staff. They are learning to share and take turns as they play in the construction area and wait to change their book to take home. They are encouraged to develop their communication skills at circle and other group times such as registration when they say good morning to each other and discuss the date and weather. Children enjoy using a variety of creative materials such as, painting, dough, and recycled modelling materials, which encourage them to express their experiences and feelings in a variety of ways.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making generally good progress and staff support them generally well through their much improved understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning covers all areas of learning, however, short term plans lack sufficient detail to enable some individual learning needs to be met appropriately. Observations and assessments are now regularly completed, but are not yet used effectively to inform planning, resulting in challenges not always being appropriate to individual stages of development. For example, children are asked to complete sound and number sheets without any real awareness of purpose.

Staff have attended special needs training and demonstrate an excellent

understanding of how to support those with special needs. Children respond well to staff involvement in their play and learning. Staff pose questions to help children think, for example, 'where does the number eight go in the line'.

Children's knowledge and understanding of their immediate and the wider world is good. They enjoy walks in the local area, visit the village shops and take an active part in school activities. They are starting to understand the use of everyday technology as they prepare and cook vegetables to make soup, and use calculators and other battery operated toys. Children are skilful in their use of number, they count each other at circle times, attempting simple calculations about how many girls and boys are present, and record information by putting appropriate numbers in the number line.

Children are starting to recognise their written names, and practise letter formation at circle times and adult-led activities, although these are not always appropriate to all children. Opportunities to make marks in child-initiated play are limited, for example, mark-making is generally restricted to the messy room. Children enjoy story times with staff and enjoy looking at books independently.

All children enjoy a varied range of creative activities, although many of these are adult-led, with few opportunities for children to develop their own ideas. For example, there is little time for them to use the craft corner or paint independently. Children thoroughly enjoy imaginary play in the building corner and spend extended periods of time deciding how to make a bench stand without it toppling and how to make a tower reach the ceiling.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children and parents are warmly welcomed to the playgroup each morning. Children demonstrate their confidence by settling quickly to activities and joining in with group routines such as registration, story and snack times. They are well known by staff who efficiently record individual details and highlight specific needs to ensure these are met effectively. Children increase their knowledge of the local community with visits to the local primary school and walks in the surrounding area. Visitors to the group further enhance this knowledge, for example the road safety unit. Children celebrate a variety of festivals throughout the year, increasing their awareness of the wider world and different lifestyles. Staff demonstrate an excellent awareness of special needs, enabling them to effectively support children who attend the group.

Children are skilfully encouraged to be well behaved, for example, to share equipment and take turns in their play and activities. Staff have reviewed their approach to behaviour management and are now consistent in their expectations for behaviour and offer frequent, meaningful praise. This positive approach effectively assists in maintaining a calm and caring atmosphere within the group. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff are available each day to discuss children's activities and progress. Parents take an active part in group

sessions, helping on a rota basis and sharing interests such as individual areas of expertise. Plans are now displayed for parents information and staff have recently produced 'tracker books' for each child, which offer anecdotal examples of activities together with photographs. Parents are requested to add their own comments to these books, regarding their child's development. This partnership helps children in their continuing learning and development. Parents on rota duty are provided with clear information about how they may assist throughout the morning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff are appropriately qualified and all those in contact with children have received appropriate clearance. Ratios are maintained at all times and cover for staff absence is in place. The register provides an accurate record of children's attendance and the registration certificate is displayed.

Leadership and Management of the playgroup is satisfactory. Children's care and well being is generally well supported by organised and caring staff and an involved committee of parents. However, policies and procedures have not been reviewed for some years and some information is not complete. Good regard is given to keeping children's records and personal information confidential.

The group recruitment, induction and training programme is well considered and annual staff appraisals highlight ongoing staff development needs. All issues from the last inspection have been addressed, although some require further development. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the quality of care and nursery education was judged as inadequate. The setting was required to improve children's overall safety, address some behaviour management procedures and review time management. They also agreed to develop staff knowledge of curriculum and assessment procedures, develop the partnership with parents and review the organisation of resources.

The group have made generally good progress in addressing these issues and therefore children's care and education has improved.

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 that emergency evacuation procedures are practised with sufficient regularity to enable all children to be familiar with the evacuation routines to maintain their safety in an emergency situation.
- ensure policies are up-to-date and reflect current practice.

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):

- continue to develop the use of assessments and observations to inform planning, to ensure that individual areas for development are fully recognised and included in activities.
- review the organisation of adult-led activities to enable children to decide individually when to join in, for example, completing sound and number sheets and playing card games.

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