



# Whitchurch Canonorum Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 139372  
**Inspection date** 12 May 2006  
**Inspector** Janet Armstrong

**Setting Address** The Village Hall, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RF  
**Telephone number** 01297 678426  
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**Registered person** Whitchurch Canonorum 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 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?

Whitchurch Canonorum Playgroup has been established for approximately 27 years and operates from the village hall set in the rural village of Whitchurch Canonorum, situated near to the town of Bridport. They are run by a committee of parent volunteers and provide sessional care for 26 children from the age of 2 to under 5 years.

The playgroup is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, term time only from 09.45 until

12.15 and offer a lunch club until 13.15. They serve the local community and surrounding villages and accept children in the term of their third birthday. The playgroup is in receipt of the government funding for 3- and 4-year-olds. There are currently 27 children on the register, of whom 24 are funded.

The accommodation consists of a main hall with access to toilet and kitchen facilities and a purpose built, securely fenced outdoor play area.

The playgroup employs a qualified play leader who has an NNEB certificate and 4 members of staff of whom 3 hold a recognised child care certificate.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. Effective measures are taken to help reduce the risk of the spread of infection and protect children from catching germs. Children learn to wash their hands through regular daily routines, such as before snack and lunch time and after using the toilet. They have access to liquid soap and paper towels to support them and help to reduce cross contamination. Children have been taught the importance of hand washing and how to wash them effectively through planned activities. The children know that they wash their hands 'to get rid of germs and use soap to kill them'. Children also have access to tissues to enable them to start taking care of some of their own personal health needs.

To help reduce the risk of the spread of infection, a sick children policy is in place to inform staff and parents of the procedures to follow to exclude infectious children. Appropriate procedures are followed and records kept for the administration of medication and recording of accidents. However, there is no written policy in place to support the safe administration of medication to inform parents and staff and promote consistency and the children's welfare.

Children have a good introduction to a healthy lifestyle. They are provided with healthy snacks, such as carrots, kiwi fruit, apples, bananas, pears, oranges, raisins, melons, cucumbers and biscuits. Squashes with additives, preservatives and sugar are no longer offered. Children are now provided with healthy options to drink, such as orange juice, apple juice, milk and water. A lunch club is offered. Parents are requested to support the setting's positive approach and their children's healthy lifestyle through providing healthy options in the lunch boxes. This has been achieved through providing parents with written literature detailing the aims and suggestions of healthy options. Appropriate procedures are in place to inform staff about children's individual dietary needs. However, there is no system to record the discussions with parents detailing how to manage any allergies, food intolerances or medical needs in an emergency situation. This compromises children's health and well-being. Children's physical development is promoted well. Regardless of the weather, children have daily opportunities to become physically active and develop their large motor skills through participation in a range of games and use of equipment.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children's safety is promoted well. All the necessary precautions have been taken to reduce potential hazards to provide children with a safe environment in which to explore. For example, the front door is locked at all times, there are no exposed electrical points and toilets can be visited safely. All the necessary furniture, equipment and play provision is in place to support the children's care and learning. The large hall has been set up well to provide children with plenty of space to move around and engage in their activities safely. The premises, furniture, equipment and play provision is all in a good state of repair and well maintained. Written risk assessments are completed on a yearly basis to enable management to oversee the safety of the environment. Staff complete informal risk assessments on a daily basis to enable them to identify and address any potential hazards as they arise.

Children are taught safe practices to enable them to help keep themselves safe and make a positive contribution towards their own and others' safety. For example, they learn not to run outdoors when leaving the hall to go to their outdoor play area. When outdoors, they learn not to run in front of children on swings and to be careful around the stinging nettles. Children advise that "Stinging nettles sting, and when they do you need to look for a spot leaf and rub it on the sting!" Children practise fire drills every half term. This enables them to follow appropriate procedures for the safe evacuation of the premises in an emergency situation. There are clear procedures in place for keeping children safe on outings, with all the necessary resources taken and higher ratios of adults maintained. Formal written risk assessments are completed before outings to local places of interest to ensure they can be visited safely and enjoyed by the children.

Staff have a sufficient awareness and understanding of child protection issues to enable them to follow appropriate procedures should they have a concern about a child in their care. This helps to protect children from harm.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy and settle quickly. Their personal independence is promoted well through the range of free choice activities available to them. They receive good levels of support in their choices from staff to enable them to experience the wide range on offer. Staff are positive role models and interact naturally with the children supporting their care and learning needs well. Children respond well to staff in their free choice activities. However, children's attention and behaviour deteriorates in some large group of activities, where they talk amongst themselves, become disruptive and do not listen or respond appropriately to staff. For example, at circle time, snack and story time. Children enjoy the outdoor play area. They use their language well to communicate and show a strong exploratory sense of their environment, both indoors and outside.

The setting offers care for children in the term of their third birthday. Children under

the age of 3 receive appropriate levels of support from staff to enable them to access all the activities offered. For example, when outdoors they are encouraged to use the range of equipment available. Under instruction and reassurance from staff they attempt the climbing apparatus and learn to use the swings. Staff have attended the Birth to three matters training. They use the framework to guide planning to enable them to support younger children's development. However, an appropriate framework, such as Birth to three matters, is not used to show the progress younger children are making. This is something that the setting intends to address.

#### Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the early learning goals and steps within to support children's learning. They work well together as a team sharing tasks and responsibilities. They deploy themselves effectively in the children's free choice activities where they extend and challenge the children's language and mathematical skills well. However, they are not always effective in supporting each other or the children when routines change throughout the session to enable a smooth changeover from one activity to another, providing children with positive messages of expectations. For example, when it is time to tidy up or line up to go outdoors. Children continue in their discussions or activities, they run around and take several minutes to come together, ignoring staff requests. Staff support the children's learning in a range of situations, such as one-to-one, small groups, adult-led and child-initiated activities, where they are able to adapt the challenges and questioning to support individual children's interests and development. Planning successfully and sufficiently enables staff to provide children with a broad and balanced curriculum that covers all aspects and steps within the six areas of learning. They provide children with an interesting range of planned activities to occupy and stimulate children's learning. Children's written records of assessment contain well written and accurate observations of children's achievements that are clearly linked to the steps within the six areas of learning. These are supported by tick lists to show the progress all children are making at a quick glance. However, the current systems do not successfully maintain confidentiality to enable staff to share with parents what progress their child is making through the steps within all aspects of the early learning goals.

Children have increasing self-confidence and self-esteem. They use their language effectively to communicate with others, clearly sharing their thoughts and ideas to extend their play. They stand up in large group situations and sing familiar songs and rhymes to the group. Positive relationships have been formed amongst the children. They play comfortably alongside each other or actively seek out others to extend their activities. They have formed trusting relationships with staff, whom they depend on to resolve disputes and support their well-being. Children learn to manage their own behaviour through sharing, taking turns and being kind to each other. However, some children's behaviour deteriorates during times within the session. Children have increasing personal independence where they are encouraged to take care of some of their own personal needs, such as pouring their own drinks at snack time and using toilet and hand washing facilities. Children have regular opportunities to mark make. They learn that writing carries meaning as they learn to recognise their own name as well as others' attending the group. They have access to a range of different mark making tools to develop their hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills.

Children learn to write their own names and some are able to form recognisable letters and are encouraged to label their own work.

Children have good counting skills and use them on a daily basis in their play to count and solve simple number problems. For example, at the creative table making spiders a 4-year-old identifies that her spider has 4 legs on each side of its body. When asked how many all together she recognises that  $4 + 4 = 8$ . Children have many opportunities to explore and investigate the natural world in which they live and do so with enjoyment. They have good access to a range of resources to support them in hunting for bugs and investigating what they find more closely. For example, a 4-year-old finds a piece of blossom caught in a cobweb, and using a magnifying glass she explains that "It comes from a blossom tree." A 3-year-old finds an empty snail shell and informs others that the snail has 'slithered off'! Children enjoy a range of topics, such as mini beasts and looking at the life cycle of frogs and butterflies where they learn to identify and recognise the changes. For example, a 4-year-old tells me that the tadpoles will soon grow legs, turn into frogs and hop away. Children have access to modern day technology and learn to use equipment to complete simple tasks through use of the computer, remote-control car and children's tape recorder.

Children have good control and co-ordination of their bodies as they negotiate space and move around their environment, both indoors and outside avoiding obstacles and others at play. They use large-scale equipment with confidence and increasing independence. For example, they learn to use their legs to propel themselves and make them go higher when on the swings. Children develop upper body strength and co-ordination through the use of a hand driven trike that requires the use of hands and arms for motion. Children develop their fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination through access to a good range of activities, such as play dough tools, scissors and sewing activities where they use a card frame and wool to make spiders webs. Children have many opportunities to explore media and materials through a good range of adult-initiated and self chosen creative activities. They use their imagination well in a range of situations to act out familiar and imagined situations. For example, in the home corner children act out different roles. They busy themselves completing daily tasks, such as putting washing in the machine and hanging it out to dry on the clothes line, making meals and caring for their babies. They enjoy small world play and use the range of resources available to them to build aeroplanes out of stickle bricks and explore the mini beast garden they have helped to create.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children have a strong introduction to their local community. They participate in local church services such as Christingle, enjoy local walks around the village and contribute towards village celebrations, for example making a Guy Fawkes for bonfire night. This provides them with a sense of belonging and develops children's positive community spirit. Children have an appropriate introduction to diversity through access to play provision, such as small world play, dolls, puzzles and books. They

celebrate a range of festivals, such as Diwali, St. George's Day and Chinese New Year as well as tasting breads from around the world and looking at how other people live. This provides children with a positive image and greater awareness of the wider world in which they live. There are appropriate systems in place to ensure children with special educational needs can be appropriately supported.

Children are generally well-behaved. They recognise the need to share, take turns and consider the needs of those around them. They recognise when they or others act inappropriately and rely on staff to settle disputes. Staff encourage children's good behaviour through praise and providing a positive role model for children. However, children's behaviour is not always effectively managed. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff meet children's individual needs well through the appropriate documentation and ongoing discussions with parents. Verbal sharing of information on a daily basis enables staff to provide continuity of care and support the children's well-being. Parents receive written information about the setting and its aims. They have access to written policies outlining the procedures staff follow when caring for their children. They are well informed about the early learning goals and what children learn through the activities offered. This, along with regular newsletters and a notice board, enables parents to make informed choices regarding the care and education their children receive. Regular questionnaires are used to communicate with parents and identify areas for improvement. Using this information, parents now have free access to view their children's records of assessment and discuss with key workers on a regular basis the progress their children are making. However, current recording systems do not support confidentiality. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning through becoming a committee member and helping out within the sessions. A complaints procedure is in place, in line with the new regulations. However, the written procedure has yet to be updated to reflect this.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Good organisation of the indoor and outdoor play areas provides children with many opportunities to experience a wide range of activities. They have free access to a good range of play provision and activities set out by staff to promote their natural curiosity and personal independence. Staff deploy themselves effectively in the children's free play choices and support and interact with them naturally. However, they are not always effective in some other situations. There are clear procedures in place for the recruitment and vetting of new staff to determine their suitability and keep children safe. However, there is no written policy in place to support this. All the necessary documentation, consents and records are in place to promote children's safety and well-being. However, not all procedures are in a written format to support staff and inform parents. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. A strong management structure enables the

staff team to focus on the day to day care and education of the children. The use of self-evaluation and parent questionnaires enables the setting to identify its own strengths and weaknesses and make improvements. Planned activities are effectively evaluated to enable management to monitor the effectiveness and impact of the nursery education they provide. There are beneficial and worthwhile systems in place to support and motivate staff. Regular meetings and yearly appraisals enable staff and management to identify strengths and weaknesses and training needs, of which staff are encouraged to attend to update their skills and gain childcare qualifications.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to implement an effective system to ensure children's arrival is reliably monitored and to review the organisation of activities to maintain concentration levels of all children. They also agreed to develop systems to show how all aspects of the six areas of learning will be covered and that it is balanced overall, improve the assessment systems to give a clear picture of children's development in all aspects of the six areas of learning and share them with parents and extend the children's introduction to solving simple number problems and distinguishing one sound from another on a regular basis.

Overall, good progress has been made. A member of staff now stands at the entrance and greets all parents and children at the start and end of each session. This has improved children's safety by enabling staff to monitor who is coming and going during these busy periods. Large group activities were reviewed and children divided into smaller groups. Games were introduced to encourage and develop children's listening skills. However, the organisation of some large group situations continues to be ineffective in promoting children's concentration, good behaviour and social skills. Planning has been successfully addressed and securely shows how all the aspects in the six areas of learning are covered over the period of the year providing children with a balanced curriculum. Children's records of assessment have been updated with mixed results. Staff record worthwhile achievements in line with the stepping stones. However, the assessment systems still do not provide a clear picture of children's progress through the steps in all aspects in the six areas of learning that can be shared with parents. Children's introduction to solving simple number problems and distinguishing one sound from another has been successfully addressed. This has been achieved through daily routines and regular activities to promote children's mathematical development and language skills.

### **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.



## 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 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):

- develop written policies to detail procedures to follow for the safe administration of medication and for managing children's individual dietary and medical needs in an emergency situation
- improve the organisation of some large group situations to ensure they effectively promote children's behaviour and develop their social skills
- develop written policies for the recruitment of staff and for managing complaints in line with changes to legislation

#### 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):

- reorganise the children's records of assessment to clearly identify the progress children are making through the stepping stones in all aspects within the six areas of learning that can be shared with parents
- Improve staff effectiveness and strategies to support children when routines change throughout the session to fully maximise the learning opportunities

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