



Middleforth Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY278271
Inspection date	16 January 2007
Inspector	Mary Wignall
Setting Address	St Leonards Church Hall, Marshalls Brow, Penwortham, Preston, PR1 9HY
Telephone number	07980 954 996
E-mail	
Registered person	Middleforth 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?

Middleforth Playgroup is a non profit making community playgroup. There has been a playgroup on the site for over 30 years. It has been registered and managed by the current management committee since 2004. The playgroup is located in the Penwortham area of Lancashire. The group mainly makes use of the main hall, a side room and a secure rear garden. There are currently 40 children on roll, 25 of whom receive funding. There is a staff team of four plus a team of eight volunteers and parent helpers. Three of the staff team have relevant qualification and one is working towards a Level 3 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are protected from infection as the practitioners follow sound hygiene routines. The practitioners make sure the premises and equipment are clean and hygienic for the children to use. They work sufficiently well as a team to protect the children's health. For example, when a child is ill during the session the area is quickly isolated and cleaned appropriately. If any children receive medication, appropriate consent and documentation is held to share with parents. This ensures consistency for the children. Parental consent for emergency medical treatment is obtained, although, it's wording is not in keeping with the National Standards and does not include medical advice.

The children are well nourished as the practitioners serve freshly prepared snacks beneficial to their health. The children enjoy a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables. The practitioners respect the children's dietary needs as relevant information is requested from parents. The children are learning simple hygiene practices as the practitioners give clear instructions for the children to follow. The children know when to wash their hands and are encouraged to sit when they are eating. The effectiveness of current procedures is limited as the children share the same water when washing their hands.

Children benefit from daily planned activities to help them develop physical control of their body. They use the well equipped outdoor space whenever possible. The children use a range of toys and equipment indoors and outdoors to promote their gross motor skills and hand eye coordination. For example, they ride bikes, play on climbing frames or throw and catch balls. The practitioners make sure the children have time to practice their fine motor skills with imaginative activities. For example, they try using chop sticks in the home areas, use scissors when making Chinese lanterns, or sprinkle cress as they make 'edible sheep'. The practitioners understand the children need time to practice and show them how to hold the scissors correctly enabling them to cut things for themselves.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which has been well planned by the practitioners. The practitioners organise separate areas for the children to enjoy a range of different activities. The children can see their work displayed around the hall making them feel welcome and part of the setting. Parents have access to a number of notice boards with information about the setting and the children's activities, including photos and the registration certificate.

The premises, toys and equipment are safe and suitable as the practitioners have conducted appropriate risk assessments to minimise any potential hazards to the children. The children are beginning to learn to keep themselves safe. The practitioners remind them to walk as they go to the bathroom before their snack and support them in helping to tidy up. The children are protected by the practitioners' sound understanding of child protection issues. They ensure

all adults working with the children are suitably vetted and supervised. The parents receive a copy of their child protection policy. The policy is not in keeping with the National Standards guidance. It does not include procedures to be followed in the event of any allegations made against a member of staff. It does not reflect current good practice and does not include relevant contact numbers. This does not fully protect the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident. They are familiar with the setting's routines. They join in well at registration, showing what items they have brought in from home. They gain self confidence as the practitioners show and talk to the children about the things they have brought. The children are able to use their initiative due to the good planning of resources by the practitioners. They are able to easily see and access what is available. The children move with confidence making choices about their activities. They enjoy a broad range of activities. The practitioners plan a number of different activity areas for the children each day. The children are able to practice and develop their skills. For instance, they practise putting their aprons on with increasing success. Many activities are repeated or regularly available for the children. The practitioners understand the children's need to have time to play with the toys and resources, knowing that many of them attend on a part time basis.

The children are fully involved in their activities. They understand the setting's routines. The practitioners only have to say once that it is nearly time for their snack and the children help tidy up and sit on the mat ready for songs and preparations for their snack. The children are increasingly confident, joining in the songs. Some of the children stand up to sing their favourite song. They are supported well as the practitioners join in the actions, offering encouragement.

The children have warm relationships with the practitioners, they go to show them things they have made or snuggle in close enjoying stories and looking at books. They chat freely about what they are doing and are fully engaged in their activities.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

The practitioners have a sufficient knowledge the Foundation Stage as they plan a broad range of activities across the six areas of learning. The planning is firmly based on the stepping stones and is contributed to by all the practitioners. The practitioners are sufficiently confident in their roles. Generally, they know what they want the children to learn from the activities provided. Planning systems are mainly based across the six areas of learning, to ensure a balanced curriculum. Planning and assessment documentation is used sufficiently to monitor children's progress. It does allow space to identify the children's next steps of learning, though this is not always effectively completed. At times the planning and assessment documentation is used to record an evaluation of the activities completed, rather than plans for the next steps of learning. As a result some of the children are not sufficiently challenged in their activities. The practitioners have in place systems to monitor the activities completed by the children.

This ensures all children, including those attending on a part time basis, have sound opportunities to access all activities.

The children are making sufficient progress towards the early learning goals. They are confident and speak to the practitioners with ease. They are interested in the activities available and move with confidence between activities. The children behave well as the practitioners make sure the children feel secure. Some of the more confident children share ideas at the circle time or offer to sing for the whole group. Most children are able to sit quietly and listen with the practitioners at circle or registration time. The practitioners understand that some of the children are young or new to the setting and move activities on sufficiently to retain their interest in them. The practitioners move activities on with clear indications to the children. The children are told of the fun things in the group that morning to stimulate their interest and encourage them to explore and find things out for themselves. The children go off confidently to explore what is available. For example, they ask the practitioners about the 'edible sheep' they may make. Others head straight for the role play area enjoying cooking pancakes or using the chop sticks. The practitioners display a good knowledge of the children and chat to them about older siblings or events in their family life. This makes the children feel secure and willing to try new things.

The practitioners use conversation and questions regularly to extend the children's thinking and vocabulary. The practitioners model good use of language for the children to hear. They give commentaries of what the children are doing, matching the children's actions with language. This increases the children's understanding of language and words. For example, they describe how the children are using the sand or how they are making patterns with the dough or magnets. The children learn the rules of conversation as the practitioners wait for the children to finish, listening with interest before they speak themselves. They encourage the children to listen to one another, taking turns in speaking as well as in games. The children have sound opportunities to mark-make or for the more able children to write their names. Some more able children are able to say the sounds of their names though do not always have the opportunity to write their names on their work. The children see a range of print used for a variety of purposes, increasing their understanding of the use of words and text. For example, the practitioner shows and reads the instructions to the children as they make their 'edible sheep'.

Children have a general interest in mathematics. The practitioners provide a balanced programme, with children experiencing shapes, measuring and patterns. The children play with a range of toys and resources, promoting their understanding and learning of mathematics. The children can experience the different sizes and shapes as they explore the different sized cups for pouring water. The practitioners show the children how numbers are used as labels in displays around the room or in following a recipe. The children enjoy the stories and rhymes used to develop their understanding of number. They join in with actions and counting with interest. Some of the more able children are confident in counting to five and beyond, although, opportunities to use and develop these skills are not effectively planned for. The planning documentation does not show how more able children are sufficiently challenged.

The children explore and investigate using all their senses. They learn about the natural world as they plant flowers or plan next year's garden. The children develop a good sense of time and place as they look at books made about past activities, such as pancake making. As many

of the children have older siblings who have attended the group, their sense of belonging and their understanding of the passage of time are increased. The children have sound opportunities to design and make things. The practitioners use a range of textures and materials for them to design with. For instance, they can use bricks or construction toys or make 'edible sheep' from natural materials. The children are becoming more confident using the computer mouse as they have a range of games and programmes to use on the easily accessible computer.

The children develop their imagination in action songs and dancing to music. They explore different sounds and movements as they pretend to be dragons moving imaginatively to the music. The children can recognise and repeat sounds as they sing their favourite rhymes in circle times. The children, using the role play area, are helped to talk about their experiences and explore their ideas. The children use their imagination, pretending to cook pancakes. They explain to the practitioner who is waiting for their pancake that it is still too hot and they have to wait until it is cooled.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children benefit from activities and resources which help them value diversity. The children learn about the wide world by well planned activities, such as Chinese New Year. The children get to experience using chop sticks in the role play area. They look at an atlas on the interest table with other items from Chinese culture. This stimulates their interest and increases their understanding of the world.

Children are valued and included in the setting. There are good procedures for practitioners to include all children in activities. For instance, a key worker system and the monitoring of the children's activities means the practitioners know the children well and make sure they have equal access to all activities. The children have a good sense of belonging. The group have strong links with the parents, having active and effective parent helpers regularly attend the group. Children can see their work displayed, and often see photos of their older siblings when they were at the group.

The children respond to appropriate expectations for their behaviour. Practitioners use good methods to involve the children and distract unwanted behaviour. As the group begin to tidy some children do not join in. They start to run and make loud noises. The practitioners skilfully talk to them at eye level. The children are given specific responsibilities. They respond positively by helping to tidy and are happy to do so. The children play harmoniously as they understand the routines and structure of the day. The practitioners encourage them to take turns, develop caring attitudes, and listen as others are talking. This creates a positive environment for the children. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. The setting provides good information to the parents about the settings' policies and procedures and the Foundation Stage. There are clear displays throughout the setting. Photographs of activities the children have previously enjoyed are always available to the parents. They have clear notes to show how they are linked to the Foundation Stage, providing good information to the parents.

The setting values the parents' views. They have comprehensive systems to find out about the children's experiences before they start at the group to use as a starting point for planning of the children's play and learning. The setting actively seeks the views of parents by conducting its own questionnaires. The parents helper rota means the parents are familiar with the setting and have good relationships with the practitioners. They chat confidently about how their children have been and what they have been doing at the group. The parents are well informed of what activities the children are currently doing. They are all encouraged to bring items from home to contribute to the children activities.

The parents are well informed about their children's achievement and progress. The practitioners send information regularly to the parents, clearly linked to the stepping stones. This means the parents are well informed and are able to continue any learning at home. The parents have ongoing conversations with the practitioners and are aware that they can look at their children's work at any time.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Sound recruitment and induction procedures means that all practitioners and volunteers have a high regard for the welfare of the children and a clear sense of purpose. All adults have completed appropriate checks to ensure the children are adequately protected. Evidence is held of these checks. Most records have all the necessary information, though some do not record the status or the countersignatory of the check. All adults working with children have clear roles and responsibilities and implement the setting's policies and procedures adequately. Not all documentation adequately reflects the in the October 2005 addendum to the National Standards. The use of parent helpers and regular volunteers enables the setting to have a high staff to child ratio. The ratios support the children's care, learning and play well. Time and space is used to maximise the children's enjoyment. The practitioners plan activities in a stimulating environment for the children each session. This involves putting all the toys and resources away after each session and setting up each morning before each session. Record keeping systems are used sufficiently well to meet the children's needs. All documentation is confidential and stored at hand for ease of reference.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager has a sufficiently clear vision for the nursery education. They ensure all adults working in the setting understand the setting's aims. Clear induction procedures mean they all have the opportunity to read, discuss and agree the setting's policies and procedures, and have clear roles and responsibilities. The provision is managed and monitored by regular team meetings and it has regular feedback from the parents. The practitioners show a commitment to access further training. They recognise the importance of effective planning and assessment and have established systems for monitoring and evaluating the success of the children's progress. The systems are reviewed regularly to improve the provision, although at present they are not fully effective.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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 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 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 the child protection policy is in keeping with national guidance and includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer

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):

- ensure planning and assessment systems identify the next steps in children's learning and that more able children are sufficiently challenged.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk