



Boley Park Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218099
Inspection date	19 September 2006
Inspector	Elaine Poulton
Setting Address	Boley Park Community Hall, 7 Ryknild Street, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 9XU
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Registered person	Boley Park Playgroup Committee
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 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?

Boley Park Playgroup opened in 1984. It operates from the community centre in Boley Park, Lichfield. The preschool playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently 30 children from two to five years on roll. This includes eight children in receipt of funding for early years education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00. The group also offers one afternoon a week to children in receipt of funding for early years education from 12:30 until 14:45 during the summer term only.

The setting employs seven part time staff to work directly with the children. Students from a local school and rota parents also work alongside the staff. Over half of the staff, including the manager hold an appropriate early years qualification. There is a member of staff who is currently working towards an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned routines. They are familiar with the need to wash and dry their hands after visiting the bathroom and before they eat their snacks. Hygiene practices are well-established and nappy checks and changing arrangements ensure younger children are protected from cross infection, as appropriate hygiene routines are in place. The room used by the children in the setting is warm and well ventilated. The cleanliness of toys, resources and equipment is suitable to ensure that children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment.

There are good procedures for managing accidents and informing parents, giving prescribed medication and caring for children who may become ill during the session. There are good procedures in place for sick children which help prevent the spread of infection and which help to keep children healthy. Staff are effective in ensuring that children's individual first aid needs are met, should there be an accident and that children are well cared for in the setting.

Staff work in partnership with parents and share information to meet all children's dietary needs. Children benefit from healthy selection of fresh fruit and spread their own bread and butter at snack time. All snacks comply with any special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy. Staff are attentive to the needs of children and drinks are available during the session. Children know they can ask for a drink when they are thirsty or help themselves to water from the water jug on the 'drinks table'.

Children enjoy and join in with a range of age appropriate games and free play activities indoors. All children benefit from using a range of resources and equipment during physical play. This active play helps them to develop their large and small physical skills well. They pedal tricycles, manoeuvre with push chairs, crawl through barrels, balance on stepping blocks and enjoy action songs and musical games which contribute to their good health. Children are active according to individual needs and are also able to take a rest when needed. This means that children are developing a positive attitude to exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safety of the children is a high priority in this pre-school setting. Security is good with staff being vigilant with external exits ensuring that visitors are greeted but do not gain access to the setting or present a risk to the children. There are effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and collection of children. They are kept safe through policies that are understood

by staff, for example risk assessments are completed on the activities, together with regular safety checks for indoor resources and equipment.

Children play safely with a range of toys that promote their development well. There is a good range of equipment, resources, toys and games to choose from that are in good condition and are well-maintained and conform to appropriate safety standards. Children can access toys and games themselves, easily and safely from a wide selection available. Equipment such as tables, chairs and furniture are all at suitable child height to ensure that children of all ages can use them safely.

Children practice emergency evacuations regularly and are beginning to understand why they need to exit the building quickly and safely when the alarm is raised. Children are learning about keeping themselves and others safe through a range of appropriately planned activities and discussions.

Children are protected from harm because staff are knowledgeable about child protection issues. Staff have a good awareness of whom to contact and the procedures to follow should an incident occur. The child protection policy is clear about roles and responsibilities and what happens should there be an allegation made against a member of staff. All child protection policies and procedures are shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The care, learning and play experiences for children in this setting are good. Children are secure in the preschool's welcoming and caring environment and they have positive relationships with staff.

There is a good range of planned activities for children under three years. Although some staff have knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework it has not been fully implemented to offer a full range of experiences. This means that whilst activities are enjoyable and well organised they do not all link successfully to the appropriate age and stage of development of each individual child.

Children enjoy painting and physical play activities. Some play alongside others involved in the same imaginative play theme. Not all children benefit from the way large group time is organised. Some younger children become restless and lose interest quickly and older children become easily distracted. They sit well together in very small groups and listen and respond to staff telling a short story. They join in with a good variety of songs and rhymes which help them learn to count numbers up to five, sometimes in language other than English.

Children are helped to set the table at snack time and manage a range of small tasks well, for example they are learning to pour out their own drinks and help to tidy away resources after use. They are helped to think through situations and solve problems, such as why they need to fasten the dolls safety harness in the pushchair. Staff are close by to offer support and guidance, which in turn helps to build trust and develop a sense of belonging.

They benefit from being part of a small key worker group which helps staff to support an plan the next steps in children's individual development. Children are helped towards independence and are supported, encouraged and praised consistently. As a result they behave well and are beginning to learn how to share toys and take-a-turn within a group situation.

They investigate their environment and access resources freely. They are well supported and introduced to a good variety of stimulating sensory play activities that help them develop use of their senses. For example they mould and roll out play dough and explore making patterns in shaving foam and mix sawdust and earth together and feel the different textures.

Nursery Funded Education.

The quality of teaching and learning in respect of children in receipt of funding for early years education is satisfactory. There is a sufficiently well organised staff team who have developed their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage suitably well to judge the impact of activities on the children. Staff plan and provide a satisfactory range of activities under each area of the six areas of learning. Learning intentions are recorded and relate to the stepping stones so that most aspects are covered through use of focused activities and routines. Most children are involved in purposeful play but not all children are helped to develop their concentration, creativity or curiosity within adult led activities. Staff plan some exciting and imaginative activities that ensure children have adequate opportunities to achieve and make satisfactory progress toward the early learning goals.

Staff use suitably effective methods to maintain children's interest and spend the majority of their time working directly with them. Staff plan a range of stimulating activities and use varying approaches to engage children but not all structured activities extend beyond the learning intentions, for example where children show an interest in a an activity.

Behaviour is appropriately managed and this results in a calm and caring environment for children to learn in. Not all children are encouraged to learn to take responsibility for their actions and consider needs of others through planed discussions and themed activities.

There is a satisfactory assessment system in place. Observations are mainly carried out as children play and are then recorded in the individual profiles. The system to monitor and evaluate children's learning is not fully developed.

Children are interested in their free play as they select and carry out activities. They are building good relationships with staff and peers and many approach an activity positively asking to take part. Children's independence skills are growing and they can make their own way to the toilet, wash their hands and pour out their own drinks.

Children are lively and friendly and respond positively to staff. They are learning to speak out in small groups and most listen intently to stories and independently select books for pleasure. They are beginning to recognise their own name cards and put them in the post box ready for registration time. They use the writing table and a range of resources, such as shaving foam, paint, sawdust and soil to make wavy lines and patterns and practice mark-making skills.

Children are beginning to understand and use numbers. They are developing problem solving skills when completing jigsaws. They demonstrate that they are gaining an awareness of mathematical concepts for example, adding and taking away through singing number rhymes, such as 'five little monkeys'. They use number in a familiar context when sorting and sequencing bears into small, medium and large. This means that children are beginning to use number names and number language during their play spontaneously.

Children develop a sense of time and place through discussion and activities. They explore and investigate autumn leaves and soil. This helps them to observe and find out about features in the natural environment. They invite 'visitors' to their group to talk about their experiences and this helps to develop an understanding of other people's culture and beliefs. Children have good opportunities to use a range of Information Communication Technology, such as battery operated resources and programmable toys.

Regular active play helps children develop their physical skills. They enjoy bouncing on the small trampoline, they pedal wheeled toys and use larger pieces of climbing equipment competently. Children carefully use one-handed tools such as scissors, with growing dexterity and control. They move freely inside and have a good sense of the space around them.

They are able to express themselves imaginatively and explore using their senses. They are excited to talk about the smell of the shaving foam and what is hidden under the shredded paper in the 'bug pool'. They name colours competently and are beginning to recognise different shades. They use their imagination well and enjoy dressing up and role play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities and use this knowledge to introduce activities about different cultures and beliefs that are of interest to the children. This helps them to gain a sense of being valued and respected as individuals and develops their confidence and self-esteem. Children have good opportunities to self-select a wide range of toys and games and choose from a varied selection of resources that are set out each session by staff.

Staff support children with special needs effectively and work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that they are included in the life of the group and can access all activities and all areas of the provision. Information about children's individual care needs is shared between staff and parents and this means children are supported well in the setting.

Children are praised consistently when they are behaving well and consequently this promotes and reinforces good behaviour. Younger children are beginning to learn how to take-a-turn with toys. Older children share popular resources such as imaginative dressing up clothes in the role play area. Children are learning how to share resources in a small group situation and are beginning to build good relationships with staff and peers. They are encouraged to carry out small tasks, such as helping to tidy away toys and resources before snack time.

All of the above approaches help to foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the setting.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early years is satisfactory. Systems to ensure that parents are kept informed about their child's progress towards the early learning goals so that they are actively involved in their child's learning are not fully effective.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting employs experienced, qualified and vetted staff to ensure that children are cared for and are well protected. Staffing ratios are well maintained resulting in children's care, learning and play being supported appropriately. The staff team help children to settle in well and develop good relationships with one another. There is always a member of staff on site with first aid training to care for children's health needs.

Policies and procedures which support good practice are in place and staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities to care for children and to ensure that children's good health, safety, enjoyment and ability to make a positive contribution is promoted well.

Staff spend most of their time working directly with and supporting children's care, learning and play experiences in the setting. Whilst all children experience a variety and balance of activities, not all activities are organised to take into account the children's age and stage of development. This in turn does not always create a positive learning environment.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The management team is generally supportive. The manager is experienced and has a suitable knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Strengths and weaknesses in the setting are identified and direction is offered to staff to ensure a consistent approach to children's learning. Individual appraisal systems are in place to support staff and identify further training to ensure children continue to make progress in all six areas of learning.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one action placed on the provider at the last inspection in 2004; to organise time and resources to effectively meet children's needs.

This has been satisfactorily met as the setting has acquired more play equipment, games, toys and resources for the children. Plans are in place to use a flexible key worker system, whereby each key worker has a small group of mixed age range of children. Prior to the new manager taking up post in September 2006 the key worker system supported a number of children of a similar or same age range in each key worker group. This means that the group is constantly

evaluating the most appropriate way to ensure children's care and learning needs are suitably met.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 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 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):

- improve outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters' framework
- ensure that children are grouped appropriately taking into account their age and stage of development to benefit their care, learning and play experiences in the setting.

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 strategies that encourage children to take responsibility for their actions and consider needs of others
- extend structured activities beyond learning intentions where children are interested or learning intention is met
- support children to develop their concentration skills and build on their individual creativity and curiosity within adult led activities
- develop further the use of observation and assessments to monitor, support and evaluate children's learning
- develop further the information parents receive on their child's educational provision, individual progress and achievements and how they can support their child's learning at home.

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