

Wycliffe Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 226904
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Inspector Sheila Dawn Flounders

Setting Address Winstanley Community Centre, Galsworthy Court, Off Blackmore Drive,
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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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Wycliffe Playgroup is a Leicester City Council run playgroup which is managed by the Children and Young People's service. It opened in 1993 and operates from the Winstanley Community Centre in the Braunstone area of Leicester. Children have access to two rooms, plus a connecting foyer area and the hall area for play. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday morning from 09:15 to 11:45 during school term times. All children share access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 25 children aged from two years six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. Children attending the playgroup live on the Braunstone Estate and surrounding area.

The playgroup employs five members of staff. All staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives regular support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

All of the children understand simple hygiene practices, they are very aware of the need to wash their hands after toileting or messy activities and before eating or cooking, using liquid soap and paper towels to limit the risk of cross-infection. Staff are careful to explain to them that they must not touch the food that other children may want to eat when the snack plate is passed around. The regular cleaning routines, including the tables prior to snack time, robust sickness policy and information given to parents about exclusion periods following illness, help children to stay healthy. Parents are requested to inform the group about why a child is absent so that other parents can be informed of anything infectious. Children do not normally need to rest or have medication, but necessary facilities and paperwork are available if needed.

Children have their health and dietary needs met because the setting works with parents to establish any allergies or preferences before they attend and then ensure that the snacks offered meet their needs. Information about dietary needs is easily available to staff when preparing snack or cooking activities. The children have a healthy snack each session, with fruit as the main staple, sometimes supplemented with items such as cake, biscuit, toast or a sandwich, which the children are usually involved in preparing. This is accompanied by a drink of milk, with water also available throughout the session to ensure children are well-hydrated. Snack time is a sociable occasion with the children sitting together in small groups, with a member of staff at each table, and one child acting as the helper to give out the cups and plates. Staff make good use of the opportunities that arise to talk to the children about what they are eating and reinforce a healthy lifestyle.

Children have good access to physical play, both inside and out, when staff fence off an area, for example, to use the wheeled toys or do some gardening. Inside the hall is available daily, to allow children to use a range of large equipment such as the climbing frame, tunnel, seesaw and trampoline. When an obstacle course is set up children take turns to go around, although some sections are easily completed by the more able and do not provide them with physical challenge. Most children confidently show the group how well they can move, and the rest rise to the encouragement offered by the rest of the children and staff. During the sessions all of the children have opportunities to move in a variety of ways, for example, travelling around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment all of which contribute to large muscle development. They also use a wide range of small equipment with increasing control, for example, rolling pins and cutters with dough, knives to prepare fruit, cogs and wheels, and a screwdriver or spanner with Lego vehicles to develop their fine movement.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and secure environment where staff are vigilant about their safety. Staff greet them on arrival, with parents signing them in and children soon learn where to hang their coats. They have use of the two large rooms for most of the session, with various activities set up in each, and designated areas for circle-time activities, messy play, snack time and then the adjacent hall is for physical play. All of the rooms are bright, airy and covered in examples of the children's creativity. The associated facilities are conveniently situated to allow children independence with toileting and hand washing, although staff are always aware and monitor how long they are gone. The large front doors are locked and visitors

or parents have to ring the bell to gain entry, with the internal switch high up out of children's reach so they cannot let themselves out. Thorough risk assessments are in place which have identified potential hazards to the children and measures are in place to counteract them, for example, covers are fitted in unused sockets, heaters have full guards and currently children are only using the male toilets due to the refurbishment in the others. However, several of the risk assessments are not dated and do not show when they were last reviewed, which could impact on children's safety as they should be reviewed after significant change.

Staff remain alert to possible hazards, for example, mopping up spillages around water play and conducting a new assessment before each outing undertaken. During outings ratios are kept low to ensure children are well-supervised at all times. Road safety is discussed and staff ensure they take necessary contact information, in case of emergencies, alongside items such as a phone, first-aid kit and several changes of clothes. Children learn to protect themselves as they are encouraged to use suncream in the warmer weather as part of the 'Sun Smart' policy and they practise the emergency evacuation drill frequently enough to ensure all staff and children take part. Children are further protected because all the staff have attended training in safeguarding children and know what procedures to put in place if necessary to report any concerns. Parents are requested to inform the group of any injuries received elsewhere or changes in behaviour to avoid any misunderstandings. Accidents that occur within the setting are recorded appropriately, fully shared with parents or carers on collection of the child and treated, if necessary, by first-aid trained staff, with anything serious also reported to the City Council.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All of the children take part in the same activities, although aimed at a simpler level for those children who are under three years. Staff have begun to provide links to the 'Birth to three matters' framework in their planning and some documentation, although the information provided for parents and used for assessments is based on the foundation stage curriculum of the over three's. They all experience a wide range of age-appropriate, child-centred activities which provide opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem through encouragement towards independence. They are able to develop their interest by having prolonged periods to persevere with an activity, to adapt what they are doing, demonstrate initiative or interact with others to broaden its scope. For example, several children initially construct separately with wooden blocks, then some co-operate to make complex models together involving balancing blocks on top of cylinders, after some alterations the end result is used by one of the children to tell the story of the 'Three Billy Goats'. During all activities where children interact with others they constantly discuss what they are doing, ask questions of each other or staff and have opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge. For example, some of the children use scales, to learn what 'heavier' means and how to get the two pans to balance, and children using the white board, for the first time, experiment with how it works, whilst those who have used it before extend their knowledge of the programmes.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The well-qualified staff group have a good understanding of the requirements of the foundation stage curriculum, which is demonstrated by the quality of their interaction, how they question children to make them think, and explain the concepts they want children to understand. They are all involved in the planning, both for the focussed activities weekly and their own keywork children's individual play plans termly,

so are aware of the learning intentions behind activities and any particular language to introduce. The group plans effectively show what the activities involve, although some need to provide more challenge, particularly in physical play and problem solving in mathematics. Also the subsequent evaluation does not determine if the desired learning intention has been achieved. The individual play plans look at what each child has achieved over the last term and what they need to do next, providing challenge within the activities to help them progress through the areas of learning the keyworker has identified.

Staff use a variety of methods with the children. Very good circle-time activities, group stories and rhyme sessions enable them all to come together, to discuss common features such as the date and weather. They also provide children with a common experience of certain stories or songs which can later be developed in small group activities, for example, the popular story of 'Mo's Jumper' and the resultant large group collage. However, for most of the session children are free to choose what activities they want to access from resources set out by the staff in accordance with the plans, across both of the play rooms. During activities staff use visual reminders for the children, for example, the ears at circle time to reinforce 'good listening', and are also careful to explain vocabulary to children when they do not understand something. They are considerate of the individual within the group, for example, ensuring that a child is able to finish off an activity when it is time to tidy up, and strike a good balance between letting the children try things for themselves and offering help or support. Staff do regular observations on the children, which the keyworker collates to maintain the child's assessment folder. These contain dated notes, a summary booklet, some photographs or pieces of work, information about what to look for next and clearly show that the children are making good progress overall.

Children in receipt of early education are generally making good progress in all areas as they have opportunities to be involved in a range of activities each session and their keyworkers use the individual play plans to encourage their participation in areas they do not readily choose to access. They are, on the whole, confident children, who separate from their parents and carers well, several taking advantage of waving from the windows until they are out of sight. Children share responsibilities, with three or four chosen each day to be helpers at circle-time and during snack, also telling the children what activities are on offer in the other room at the beginning of the session. As it is part of a regular routine children now readily sit together and listen to the story or chat together at snack. Most are able to engage in co-operative play, sharing resources or taking turns in a game, although a few still find this hard but respond to the quick intervention of staff. Circle-time activities provide children with many opportunities for discussion, to consider initial letters in their names and to join in eagerly with rhymes or the refrain of stories. They also have to think about the various options staff give for activities and listen for the reason to leave the group, such as what colour they are wearing or if they have writing on their clothes.

All of the children have positive experience of books and reading. They are encouraged to take library books home to share with their families, have a cosy book corner within the setting where they are often found pretending to show the pictures to others just as the staff do to them, or sitting with an adult listening intently to a story they have chosen. They use the language skills that they acquire in their own imaginative play, to explain how they are developing a particular activity, for example, the use of felt pieces to make an elaborate snake, or to talk about what they are doing. Many of the activities the children take part in help to develop their hand-eye co-ordination and pre-writing skills, such as free painting, drawing and practising pencil control when using stencils. Some of the more able children are able to copy their names using correctly formed letters, although they do not write independently as they all still have a year before they enter reception class.

Children have many opportunities each session to practise their basic counting skills in practical ways, such as how many children there are, how many boys or girls, or during number rhymes. These are also used to introduce the concepts of addition and subtraction as they work out how many monkeys are left on the bed for instance, using the corresponding number of figures to demonstrate. Children experience measurement as they help to weigh the 'compare bears' and also sort them by colour, size or follow the patterns on the cards and they are beginning to use mathematical language such as 'smaller' or 'heavier' during activities. However, staff do not always use the opportunities that arise to encourage the more able children to solve mathematical problems. Children access a particularly diverse range of construction materials, which provide them with opportunities to investigate how tools work, to make moveable models, to adapt and modify their models and to select appropriate resources to achieve the end product they envisage.

They use all of their senses to explore the world around them, for example, digging in the garden, watching the ants and worms in their containers in the room, feeling the texture of sand or biscuit dough and tending the seeds they have planted. The interactive white board gives all the children access to technology and they are confident about what they want to do on it, either following programmes or free drawing. They also have other programmable toys, a range of cars operated by friction and some opportunities to use the digital camera. Creative activities are a strong feature of the setting, with children having very good opportunities for group collages, exploring a range of materials, colours and textures as they do. They use paint in a variety of ways, often with additional resources such as marbles or sponges. Regular music sessions ensure that children are able to enthusiastically sing many songs and rhymes from memory, with a wide repertoire, sometimes accompanied by instruments and often by actions. Children regularly talk about their homes and families, information which is sometimes incorporated into the planning, for example, recent activities in connection with Father's Day.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met well because staff obtain detailed information from parents before they attend, which is reinforced by their own observations during the first few sessions they attend. Systems are in place to identify and support those with additional needs, although external professionals are never approached without parental consent. Children new to the setting settle in well and quickly find their way around and build a strong sense of belonging as they learn to be more independent. They take pride in taking home their creative efforts and also in seeing them displayed on the walls.

Children begin to distinguish between right and wrong because the staff are consistent, positive role models for them, they are made aware of the basic boundaries which are in place soon after they start and the simple routines mean that they know what behaviour is expected of them at certain times. For example, they know when it is time to tidy up, that only helpers give out cups and plates or that they need to sit down and listen at circle-time. Gentle reminders are given by staff if necessary, but on the whole behaviour is good. When incidents do occur staff talk to the children at their level, remind them that they should not be doing it and encourage them to sit down if appropriate or distract them off to another part of the room. Praise is used to reinforce desired behaviour and manners are also encouraged. Significant incidents are recorded and shared with parents, whilst retaining confidentiality about any other child involved.

Children have good access to a wide range of resources that provide positive images of culture, gender and disability. Some of these are the groups' own and others are available through the local toy library, which parents are also encouraged to use. Children are currently all aware of their own needs and able to communicate these to staff if necessary, for example, to ask to go to the toilet. Staff are already planning ahead to accommodate varying language needs for children due to attend next term to ensure they will be able to communicate appropriately with them. All of the children have opportunities to make decisions for themselves throughout the sessions, and build up their self-esteem as they see other children and staff respect their choices. They are also aware that other children make different choices to their own, which are equally respected by staff. Thus children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All parents and carers have access to a range of information about the setting, which can be translated into other languages. This includes details of the foundation stage curriculum for those over three years, but not the 'Birth to three matters' framework which is used for the younger children so parents are unaware of what is involved. Information is collected from them before their child attends to enable staff to care for individual needs and help their child settle quickly within the group. Parents and carers are welcomed to bring the child for visits prior to starting, including attending the 'play and stay' sessions run for younger children. They are given information about the main policies and informed of how to access further details should they wish. Details are also available of a range of services within the local community.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is good. They have both formal and informal channels to discuss their child's progress with staff through daily exchanges of information and when they receive their copy of their child's individual play plan each term and the Early Years Transfer profile when they leave. Staff ask for information from parents about the child's abilities in all areas of learning when they start their assessment files which provides the opportunity for them to share what they know. The individual play plans give parents ideas each term about ways in which they can be involved in their child's learning outside the setting, they are also able to share books with their child and attend events which are organised for the local community, such as the recent Easter parade.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff make very good use of their time during the session to provide a variety of activities for the children. They change the usage of rooms, for example, setting up the hall for physical play or preparing the snack, when the children are actively engaged in activities elsewhere so that children do not have periods where they are waiting for something to happen. This is possible because ratios are maintained above the minimum level required, enabling a member of staff to leave the group to set up another activity without the care and safety of the children being compromised. When short periods arise, for example, when a table is finished at snack time ahead of others, staff use the time to sing rhymes or talk to the small group. Resources are also used well, with different activities daily ensuring that children have opportunities to use a variety of equipment. The staff work very well together as a team, some are more confident in their abilities than others, but as a whole they make use of their strengths with differing responsibilities taken, for example, to do the clearing away after snack, to keep the notice boards updated or as the special educational needs co-ordinator. All the necessary records, policies and procedures are in place, with most of the documentation accurately maintained, although improvement could be made in its storage and accessibility. A detailed recruitment, vetting and induction procedure is followed for new staff, which is followed up by informal meetings, although a more structured appraisal system is being introduced.

The leadership and management of early education is good. Internal leadership is very positive, with the supervisor leading by example and encouraging all staff to take an equal, active part in the group. Responsibility for planning, record keeping and day-to-day activities is shared between the staff, but the supervisor and her manager keep a sufficient overview of the whole provision to be able to monitor and evaluate the early education. Regular meetings allow any issues that arise to be discussed and training needs to be identified. A strong commitment to improvement is demonstrated. Staff continue to attend a variety of relevant training to enhance their knowledge and skills, money is made available to obtain new resources and the building is currently undergoing refurbishment to provide better facilities, particularly for the outside area. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspections the provider was asked to improve the contents of the first-aid box, the complaints procedure and attendance records. There is now an appropriately stocked first-aid box, the complaints procedure includes the details of the regulator and is available to parents, and the register of staff and children show their hours of attendance. These measures improve the health, and positive contribution outcomes for children.

The provider was also asked to improve planning, information available to parents and the resources for technology. There is now re-designed planning in place which covers all six areas of learning and provides an effective tool to chart children's progress when linked with the assessments and the individual play plans. These play plans provide more information for parents about their child's progress to deepen their understanding and examples of activities to follow at home. Family learning sessions also take place and play packs are available, with a prominent display area in the foyer of information about the foundation stage curriculum and the daily activities. Since the last inspection technology is bettered resourced and there is now an interactive white board linked to a laptop computer which is used by all the children, supplemented by various small toys which have been purchased with some additional also obtained from the toy library at times.

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 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):

- ensure the risk assessments are reviewed after significant change
- make information available to parents about the framework of activities followed by the younger children.

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):

- consider how more challenge can be added in group physical activities for more able and confident children
- expand the evaluation of focussed planned activities to consider whether the intended learning takes place.

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