

Ravenside Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	319274
Inspection date	20 June 2007
Inspector	Shirley Peart
Setting Address	St James & St Basils Church Hall, Ravenside Road, Fenham, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 9UB
Telephone number	0191 275 3056
E-mail	
Registered person	Ravenside Pre-school 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 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?

Ravenside Pre-School has been providing sessional care for the past 34 years. It is based within St James and St Basils church hall which is located within Fenham, a residential area of Newcastle upon Tyne. The group has sole use of the premises during its opening hours. The children have access to a large hall, toilet facilities and a cloakroom. There is also an enclosed grassed area for outdoor play.

The group is open from Monday to Friday from 09.30 to 12.00 term-time only. The pre-school provides places for a maximum of 30 children aged from two and a half years to five years. There are currently 32 children on roll, of whom 16 receive funding for nursery education. The group also supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The group is overseen by a committee. There are currently four permanent members of staff and a volunteer who work with the children. All permanent staff hold relevant qualifications for their roles. The setting receives support from an Early Years Adviser from the local authority and Playgroup Network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment and staff follow good hygiene practices so that children's health and safety is well protected. For example, staff wash tables before and after snacks, sweep up sand and mop up water after spills. Children are supervised with hand washing before eating and before cooking activities, and during cooking they also wear appropriate small aprons. Children know to roll their own sleeves up before a messy, creative activity and children under three are beginning to recognise their own needs for using the bathroom, as they seek out staff members to take them. Therefore, they are gaining a good awareness of their own self-care needs and good hygiene practices.

Sufficient staff hold relevant first aid certificates, clear exclusion information regarding sickness is available to parents and records relating to medication and accidents are appropriately completed. Parents also give their consent for any necessary emergency medical treatment that may be necessary. A comfortable area is available should children become ill and parents are contacted immediately if this occurs. This ensures that good procedures are followed and children's health needs are met very well.

Snack time is very well organised. Snacks are prepared in advance, children wash their hands beforehand, sit in small groups at tables and behave very well. They use sign language successfully in a planned way during this time and clearly enjoy the social occasion, as they eagerly chat to their friends and staff.

Children generally use the outdoor area when weather permits, but they also clearly enjoy their indoor physical play, which helps them to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They run around enthusiastically as they kick balls, pick up hoops to climb through and negotiate space when they play on bikes and cars. Staff ensure that there is plenty of space so that children have sufficient room to move safely during these well planned activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in one large room which is suitable for their needs, as staff make the best use of the available space. For example, they divide areas up very well, such as role play, creative and messy areas, and they set out a comfortable reading corner, appropriate writing area, floor play area and interest table. Children move around easily in the spacious hall accessing their activities and toys easily. For example, they have plenty of space to walk around and manoeuvre the remote control 'bugs' around the room with good control. Children's art work is well displayed, which gives a welcoming feel and ownership to the children.

There is some sturdy wooden furniture in the role play area. Matching coloured tables, chairs and cups help children to recognise and name colours. For example, they place their name on the corresponding coloured map when entering the group, choose which colour table they want to sit at for snack and take turns to give out the corresponding coloured cups to the tables. Empty household containers, metal pans, good quality dressing up clothes in the role play area and other toys are in very good condition, clean and well maintained. Staff are alerted to any broken or worn equipment as these are checked every day when they are put out and put away

at the beginning and end of every session. Toys are also washed each term, so that children are protected from any hazards.

Children are safe due to regular daily routines and safety procedures carried out by staff, such as manning the doors when children arrive and leave and ensuring that the room and gardens are secure at all times. Staff's and visitors' names are recorded and children's times of arrival and departure are also suitably recorded on the daily register. Safety notices, such as clear fire procedures and gate safety, are prominently displayed for staff and parents, which ensures that everyone has a responsibility for keeping children safe. Safety practices are suitably built into the children's daily routines. For example, they are reminded to ride their bikes and cars the same way around during indoor physical play, they line up carefully in small groups before snack for hand washing and 'march' happily to the toilets. This ensures that regular practices keep children safe, but are also fun.

Suitable information and procedures are in place regarding child protection. All staff have carried out further training and are aware of the procedures to follow. This ensures that children's welfare is appropriately protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Some children under three enter the group apprehensively at first, as they are clearly attached to their carers. However, they soon settle quickly and leave their parents and carers confidently, happily handing their comforters, such as toys and dummies, to staff for the 'favourite toy box'. During play they are happy and animated. They choose to play alongside each other in the sand and water or at the writing table and eagerly bash and prod the play dough, talking about what they are doing.

Younger children happily join in with whole group action songs and manage to copy the staff and older children very well. They show a keen interest in technology as they confidently use the remote control to move the 'caterpillar' around the room or press buttons on the tape recorder to switch it on and off. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is not currently implemented, however staff have some knowledge of this and are aiming to develop this area.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are well deployed, they move around the room ensuring that groups of children receive sufficient attention. They manage children's behaviour in a positive way, for example when some children become boisterous, staff channel their energy into physical play. Some well planned activities, outings and having visitors in to the setting ensure that the provision assists children's learning and development appropriately. Staff offer some good challenges to older children, such as encouraging them to control balls by bouncing them into the hoops and catching, or supporting them in their choice to complete a 'worksheet.'

Medium term and weekly planning is documented. However, this is not sufficiently followed by all staff and although the learning intention and modification of activities is documented, this is not usually followed in practice. Therefore, evaluations and observations of children's progress is not linked back to the learning intention. All children, including the under threes, have the same workbooks with set activities which are not suitable to effectively monitor

children's progress through the stepping stones. However, suitable plans are in place to change the planning and assessment system in the near future, which is good.

Children receiving nursery education are very independent and run eagerly into the group. They are warmly welcomed by the staff so have a strong sense of belonging and leave their parents and carers easily. They find their friends, demonstrate care and concern and relate very well to each other, they concentrate well on their activities and use sign language in a planned way, which helps all children to understand different ways to communicate. Children talk confidently about themselves and what they are going to do. They write and draw with good control and name their images. Most children recognise their own name at self-registration and snack time and are starting to show an interest in print around them, as they successfully point out and match letters in their name. They watch and listen attentively to the tales of 'Ed the Duck' and children enjoy taking turns at looking after him, by taking him home at the weekend.

Children are gaining a good awareness of mathematical concepts during everyday play and use mathematical language appropriately. For example, children correctly point out whether they have 'long' or 'short' sleeves and they recognise shapes that represent objects, such as when gloop is poured onto the table they state that it is 'a circle like the moon'. Children clearly enjoy creative, messy activities as they eagerly explore the properties of gloop and describe what it looks and feels like. They play happily in the role play area, choose their dressing up clothes, pretend to cook and serve dinner on plates using their imaginations for a clear purpose. They sing spontaneously during play, as well as enthusiastically joining in with taped music songs and action rhymes that they know very well. They clap in time to the music and pretend to play the drums and flute, clearly enjoying this activity.

Children use programmable equipment with confidence, such as remote controlled toys, battery operated microwaves, telephones and table top computers. They are therefore gaining a good understanding of how to operate simple technology. Activities that help children to learn about the natural world are built into planned activities, such as trips out to see the cows on the moor and exploration of the church gardens to look for insects or to collect tree bark.

Children's physical development is progressing well. They use equipment such as bikes, small cars, dolls' buggies, footballs, hoops, play dough tools, scissors and pencil sharpeners with confidence. Planned activities through external visitors, such as The Bare Toed Company, enable children to participate in expressive dance using chiffon and lycra, which enables them to move freely with pleasure and to control and manage their bodies to create movements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff know the children well and obtain suitable information from parents, as well as completing an Initial Child Profile on children's capabilities. An Asian worker assists and supports children and parents who have English as an additional language very well, although signage in different languages and varied images are limited. Differences are acknowledged well and celebrated, such as when staff and children talk positively about wearing glasses. Staff work alongside parents and other professionals, such as inclusion workers and speech therapists where necessary, so that children's differing needs are well supported.

Children's behaviour is good and they know and follow routines well. For example, they line up carefully at the wall in small groups ready to wash their hands before snack and walk back to their table. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is met.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are introduced to a key worker who completes all initial documentation on their children. There are some good home links, as children take turns to care for 'Ed the Duck' and parents write their adventures in his diary, children also borrow books from the playgroup library. Although there is some information in the parents booklet regarding nursery education, old terminology is used. Therefore, some parents are unaware of the nursery education curriculum, stepping stones and early learning goals and are unsure as to how their children's progress is monitored. For example, there is no information on display and children's workbooks are not effective.

Parents feel that the staff are warm, friendly and approachable. Many parents continue to use the group over the years as they introduce younger siblings. They feel that their children are guided and supported well, learn good social skills, access varied activities and enjoy coming to the group.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff and committee details are held on file within the group. Vetting procedures are carried out and the person in charge is aware to inform Ofsted of any changes to the committee members. Staff have relevant qualifications for their roles and some have carried out further short courses, such as safeguarding children, child psychology, and participation with the under 5s. Some staff are working towards a National Vocational Qualification Level 4, therefore children are well cared for by competent and confident staff.

Documentation, such as attendance records, parental consents and relevant policies and procedures, works suitably in practice to promote children's health, safety and enjoyment. The Ofsted contact telephone number is clearly displayed for parents. Although there have been no complaints, details on how to make a complaint and the contact number and address for Ofsted is not documented in the parents booklet.

Staff organise themselves well. Due to the shared use of the room, all equipment and toys have to be put out and put away before and after every session. Staff arrive very early to ensure that the room is well set up, then some staff clear away and change activities, while other staff manage snack time, which ensures limited disruption to children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. The playgroup leader is relatively new to the role, but is clearly eager to provide effective nursery education. Some other staff have been in post for a number of years, therefore they are dedicated and committed to the provision. All staff work well together, they are keen, motivated and more than willing to improve and develop the educational provision for the children. Staff benefit from regular meetings and effective support from an adviser based in the local authority and a development worker from Playgroup Network. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group was requested to: upgrade staff's computer skills to increase their confidence in using information technology; make full use of opportunities for children to understand that text links with sound to ensure that children gain knowledge from books, and to help them understand that marks made when writing could convey meaning; and ensure that mathematical language is introduced into the children's vocabulary to enable them to express mathematical concepts.

The group has made good progress. Some staff are adept at using a computer, which ensures that children gain help where necessary. A book area is well set out, children are encouraged to choose and look at books after snack and before physical play, and a home-playgroup library is available for children and parents to borrow books. Children also have sufficient opportunities for mark making activities and staff encourage use of mathematical language during play. Children's efforts in these areas are recognised and well supported by staff.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- consider increasing the images and print within the environment that reflects the different cultures and ethnicity of the children attending

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):

- implement the planned changes for the nursery education planning, evaluation and assessment systems, so that this clearly shows the progress that children are making towards the early learning goals
- ensure that parents are clearly aware of the nursery education curriculum, so that they understand how their children's progress is monitored.

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