

Lee Street Church Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	122696
Inspection date	09 October 2007
Inspector	Joanne Lindsey Caswell
Setting Address	Lee Street Evangelical Church, Lee Street, Horley, Surrey, RH6 8ES
Telephone number	01293 784294
E-mail	
Registered person	Patricia Legg
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?

Lee Street Church Playgroup has been registered since 1989. It is a privately owned group which operates from Lee Street Church in Horley, Surrey. The playgroup provides sessional care for 24 children aged from two to under five years. The playgroup accepts children over the age of two and a half years. The playgroup is open during term time only, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, from 09:00 to 12:00. Children have access to a main hall and a smaller room. There is a large enclosed outdoor area available for outside activities.

There are currently 20 children, aged from two to four years, on roll. This includes 10 children who receive funding for nursery education. The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

A team of five staff work with the children, some of whom hold recognised early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are many good procedures in place which promote children's healthy development. For example, children benefit from healthy and nutritious foods at snack time and choose from a wide selection of fruit, vegetables and savoury snacks. The snack bar routine is organised well, enabling children to develop an interest in healthy eating and understand the importance of eating foods which are good for them. Staff sit and eat with the children, presenting themselves as good role models and creating a homely and sociable snack time. As a result, children develop positive attitudes towards healthy eating.

Children become increasingly confident with personal care routines. They take themselves to the toilet and understand the importance of flushing the toilet after use and washing their hands. Effective procedures are in place to help prevent the spread of infection. For example, children use liquid soap and paper towels. Before eating and cookery activities, children clearly understand why they must wash their hands to prevent the spread of germs. Children help themselves to tissues to wipe their noses and understand the importance of disposing of tissues hygienically.

There is some provision for physical play, although opportunities for this are not utilised fully. Children have some access to the outside area, although this is only for limited sessions. However, there are plans in place to develop this area. Children use resources for climbing, crawling and balancing and use wheeled toys skilfully. They run and move around freely and show good balance and co-ordination. There are many resources available for children to develop their manipulative skills and dexterity. For example, children pour their drinks at snack time; they handle scissors and writing materials skilfully and undertake activities such as threading.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are bright, colourful and inviting to children. There is ample room for children to clearly see what is available and to move around the hall safely and easily. Staff make good use of the library room for quieter activities and for 'morning ring', enabling children to be free from distractions within the main hall and remain focused and interested. Children access the toilets and hand washing areas easily and safely and good staff deployment ensures that children are always supervised. Staff pay good attention to promoting children's safety and security and ensure that when the outside area is being used, visitors to the hall do not pose a risk to children.

There is a good range of high quality toys and play materials available, all of which is regularly checked by staff to ensure it consistently remains safe for children's use.

Children have very good opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they discuss topics and engage in activities relating to safety and develop an awareness of potential hazards. For example, during 'Danger Week', children learn about firework safety and staff invite visitors to the setting, such as representatives from the emergency services, to reinforce children's learning about keeping safe. Throughout the daily routine, children clearly understand why they must not run inside and why they must be careful whilst handling scissors. This ensures

that children develop understanding about the importance of safety and the need for taking appropriate precautions to keep themselves free from harm.

Children's safety and welfare is promoted well as staff have a secure understanding of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding children. They attend appropriate training and written policies reflect appropriate procedures. This ensures that staff take relevant action if they ever have any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is a very happy, busy and positive atmosphere within the playgroup. Children clearly enjoy the sessions and benefit from a good selection of play opportunities and focused activities. Staff know all the children very well and form very positive attitudes with them. This results in a very homely, relaxed and fun environment. Children call staff 'Auntie' and clearly develop very strong relationships with all staff members and approach them confidently for comfort and support. As a result, all children's care needs are met well. Children are stimulated well and develop very good social skills. The younger children learn from the good examples set by the older children. Consequently, all children develop awareness of the importance of sharing, taking turns and being kind to one another.

Children's developmental needs are met well. Staff carry out regular observations and are aware of the differing needs of the younger children. Activities are appropriately adapted to enable the younger children to be challenged appropriately. This ensures that all children take part and benefit from appropriate levels of support.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan an exciting, creative and practical range of activities. Children benefit from first-hand experiences, enabling them to develop interest, curiosity and be able to explore their learning. For example, as part of topic work on Caring for Living Things, children handled a range of mini beasts and looked for animals in the outside area. They learn about the life cycle of animals by observing the change from caterpillars into butterflies. As part of topic work on Spring, children undertook a Spring walk to detect the signs and indicators of seasonal change. This enables children to explore and make their own discoveries, encouraging children to ask questions and become interested in different topics.

Staff are skilled in planning activities which incorporate many different areas of learning. For example, the current topic of Nursery Rhymes has enabled children to explore many different mathematical concepts as they discuss the nursery rhyme 'Hickory, Dickory Dock'. Children looked at clocks, made their own clocks and identified numbers. They began to develop awareness of the concept of time through practical games and activities. This enables children to understand complex mathematical concepts through well-planned, practical experiences.

Children's progress towards the early learning goals is closely monitored. Staff have responsibility for their own keyworker groups, which is overseen by the playgroup manager. Activities are planned to cover all six areas of learning with clearly identified learning intentions and proposed outcomes. Staff make full use of observation and evaluation in order to inform future learning and further planning, ensuring that children's individual learning needs are consistently identified. However, some written planning records do not consistently reflect how staff intend

to adapt activities to challenge and support children's different learning patterns. The daily routine offers a busy and stimulating range of activities, although, due to designated group times as snack time, children's play and learning is sometimes interrupted.

There are very good opportunities for children to develop confidence and independence. Children make their own choices and take care of their own needs. For example, they self-register on arrival and choose their own activities. Children play well together and enjoy the company of their peers. They are polite and kind to one another and clearly understand the need for sharing and co-operation. Children spontaneously say 'please' and 'thank you' to one another and apologise if they have accidentally hurt each other.

Children's language and communication skills are very good. They engage in lengthy discussion with staff and enjoy sharing their thoughts, news and ideas. The 'morning ring' session is used effectively for small group discussion, encouraging children to have confidence to talk in front of the group and listen effectively to others. Staff make full use of stories and rhymes to extend topics and curriculum themes. For example, as part of topic work on 'Old McDonald had a Farm', children read farm stories and play imaginatively with farm animal masks, encouraging creative use of language. There are very good opportunities for mark making and many resources available for children to develop early writing skills. This enables children to develop awareness that print and text carry meaning. As a result, children freely access writing resources in their play. For example, at the role play telephone box, children use pencils and paper for 'taking messages', encouraging good use of writing for a purpose.

The provision for mathematical development is strong. Staff utilise every opportunity to introduce children to a range of mathematical concepts through practical activities. Children count confidently and develop very good skills in number recognition. As part of topic work on Easter, children learn about different shapes, such as oval, heart, diamond and star. During cookery activities, children use traditional scales with weights, to recognise the concept of weight and use appropriate comparative language. Similarly, children measure themselves on a height chart and use mathematical language to describe 'bigger' and 'smaller'.

There are many opportunities for children to explore and investigate. They observe the weather and become increasingly aware of the environment. During outside play on the day of inspection, children excitedly found a worm and were keen to touch it under staff supervision. Staff support children's understanding of the wider world by inviting visitors to the playgroup to talk about different roles and cultural differences. For example, children enjoyed a visit from an Italian parent and made pizzas. Children confidently use the computer and clearly understand how technology works. They request their favourite programs and confidently operate battery and programmable resources.

There is good provision for children to express their creativity. They see their work clearly displayed around the playgroup walls and take an active part in helping with wall displays. Work on display reflects a wide range of media and techniques, such as observational drawings, collage and painting. There is good provision for role play and children use their imagination well to recreate familiar scenarios. Good use of supporting resources, such as dressing up clothes, masks, dolls and small world resources help to extend this well and encourage children's imagination.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are consistently treated equally and fairly as all the staff know children well and clearly understand their personal needs. Staff ensure that appropriate information is obtained from parents regarding children's individual routines, cultural diversity and health and welfare. This ensures that the playgroup routine is organised appropriately to support this. Staff are fully committed to promoting anti-discriminatory practice in all areas of playgroup management. This ensures that all children have equality of opportunity and are able to develop at their individual rate. Topic work clearly helps children to respect the cultural and diverse needs of others and staff are dedicated to ensuring that children learn about the wider world and have consideration for the different needs of others. As a result, children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

There is appropriate support in place for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A designated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator works closely with all staff, parents and any external agencies, where necessary, to support children's personal needs. The premises are fully accessible, ensuring that the playgroup offers a fair and inclusive environment for all.

Children behave very well. They clearly understand acceptable behaviour levels and staff give clear explanations as to why some behaviour is unacceptable. Children's social skills are very well-developed, enabling children to play co-operatively together; to share and negotiate in their play and to co-operate well with others. This results in a very positive learning environment and a happy atmosphere.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents give positive feedback about the playgroup and praise the welcoming and supportive approach shown by staff. All staff are fully committed to supporting all parents and families and ensuring the highest standards of care for all children. Parents show an active interest in helping out in the group and clearly understand their responsibilities. There is good information provided for parents regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum and all parents have regular access to their own child's developmental records. Parents and staff regularly discuss children's progress and there are good lines of communication in place to ensure that parents can approach staff at any time for advice and support. This helps children to see their parents and the staff as equal partners in their learning and strengthens the partnership between home and playgroup.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff work well together and support one another well. The staff team is strong and well-established as many staff have worked together for several years. Effective staff deployment at all times ensures that children are closely supervised, have plenty of individual attention and activities are organised appropriately. Good procedures are in place to ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted and volunteers are aware of their daily responsibilities.

The daily routine offers a balance of child-initiated play and learning with adult-directed activities. However, the routine is fairly structured with children coming together for occasions, such as snack time. This restricts children from benefiting from uninterrupted play and learning. Also, at present, the outside area is not organised effectively to enable children to access this area continuously during the playgroup session, limiting children's opportunities for physical play.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The playgroup manager is fully involved in the delivery of the Foundation Stage curriculum and leads a dedicated, professional team. All staff are committed to their roles and support each other well. Training opportunities are provided in some areas such as first aid and child protection. However, at present there are no formal systems in place for addressing other training and development needs. As a result, not all staff have sufficiently updated their knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and their awareness of forthcoming changes in early years care and education.

Most regulatory documentation is in place, although the attendance record lacks detail of children's actual attendance times. As a result, the record does not consistently reflect which children are on the premises at any one time, particularly when children arrive late, or are collected from the playgroup early. Written policies and procedures are in place and are made available to parents. Children's records are stored securely and confidentially.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Care inspection, three recommendations were raised. These related to the safety of the radiators and documentation relating to children's existing injuries and personal information. Staff have addressed all these issues. The radiators are now securely covered ensuring they are safe for children. Documentation has been reviewed to ensure a full record of accidents is maintained and that staff obtain appropriate information from parents to support children's care needs.

At the last Nursery Education, two points for consideration were raised. These related to the organisation of the reading area and the visible evidence of numbers within the playgroup environment. Staff have addressed both these points. The reading area has been re-organised, making it a cosy area with soft furnishings, low level book displays and comfortable seating, providing a welcoming and interesting place for children to enjoy books. Staff have reviewed displays to include more visible evidence of numbers within the playgroup environment. Children have made their own number lines and the provision for mathematics is a strength of the playgroup.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted which 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 complaint 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):

- review the organisation of the daily routine to provide extended periods of uninterrupted play for children
- review the procedures for recording children's attendance to ensure that an accurate written record is maintained at all times, including children's times of arrival and departure
- improve the provision for promoting children's health by making more use of the outside play area to provide additional opportunities for physical play

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 the format of curriculum planning to clearly reflect how children's individual learning needs will be catered for
- improve the provision for addressing staff's training and development needs to ensure that regular training is completed by all staff to enhance their knowledge of early years practice

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