

# Barns Green Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113371
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Joanne Lindsey Caswell
<b>Setting Address</b>	Village Hall, Muntham Drive, Barns Green, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01403 730093
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Barns Green Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Barns Green Playgroup has been established since 1978. It is managed by a voluntary committee and operates from the village hall in Barns Green, near Horsham, West Sussex. The playgroup serves the local rural area. Children have access to a large hall, toilets and a fully enclosed outside area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open during term time only, from Monday to Friday, from 09:30 to 12:15. A lunch club operates every day when children may stay until 13:00.

There are currently 13 children, aged from two to four years, on roll. This includes seven children who receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

A team of four permanent and two bank staff work with the children. Of these, three staff hold recognised early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children have very good opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle. They develop independence with personal care routines and clearly understand the importance of hand washing before eating and after toileting. They access tissues easily and wipe their noses, understanding they must dispose of tissues hygienically. Children spend plenty of time outside, enabling them to benefit from good amounts of fresh air and exercise. Staff make full use of the village location and rural environment, enabling children to go for walks, run around under staff supervision in the adjoining countryside and move in a variety of ways. Children negotiate wheeled toys confidently and develop fine motor skills as they use writing materials, handle scissors and undertake activities, such as threading. This helps to support children's physical development and contributes towards their health and physical well-being.

Children's health and welfare needs are addressed fully. Staff maintain accurate accident and medication records and ensure all relevant information is exchanged with parents. Clear sickness policies are in place ensuring that parents fully understand their child must not attend playgroup if suffering from an infectious illness. This helps to prevent the spread of illness between children and staff. The playgroup environment is clean and well-maintained and staff are vigilant in helping to prevent cross-infection. Children develop an awareness of good health by learning about effective dental routines and understand how their bodies work through topic work.

Children's dietary needs are met well. The playgroup's healthy eating policy reflects staff's commitment to helping children develop positive, healthy eating patterns. The snack time routine has been reviewed and is now presented attractively and is a favourite part of the morning for children. Nutritious snacks, such as fresh fruit, are offered and all children are encouraged to try new fruits and develop a wider interest in healthy foods. Drinking water is freely available at all times, enabling children to help themselves to drinks when they are thirsty. However, during snack time, children do not pour their drinks independently.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The premises are fully secure and staff create a colourful and welcoming environment for children. Staff are particularly vigilant in promoting children's safety and ensure that all relevant precautions are taken. For example, the kitchen is made inaccessible to children and during toileting routines, children are fully supervised at all times. When maintenance work is being carried out in the hall, staff ensure that children are fully protected and move children to a safer environment in an adjoining hall.

Children play with a good selection of equipment and resources, all of which is maintained appropriately and is in a safe condition. Children have some freedom of choice in selecting equipment, as they use the 'Choice Board' to ask staff to obtain additional resources from the store cupboard, if children want to play with something that is not already out.

Staff carry out daily safety checks on the premises and are conscientious in recognising potential hazards. For example, when children use a different room, staff gently remind children about how they would evacuate from the hall in the event of an emergency, as this is a different routine to the one children are used to. During outings, staff are vigilant in supervising children

closely and ensure that high adult to child ratios are in place to ensure close attention at all times. Children learn about safety as part of playgroup routines. For example, they recognise they must sit down whilst using scissors and must not run around inside. This helps children to understand potential hazards and learn how to keep themselves safe.

There are generally good procedures in place for safeguarding children. Most staff have completed training, although some senior staff have not updated their training recently. As a result of this, some staff's knowledge of safeguarding policies and procedures is not fully up-to-date.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled and clearly enjoy their morning at playgroup. They arrive enthusiastically and greet their friends and the staff excitedly. Children play happily together and form close friendships with one another. They develop good skills in sharing and understand the need for taking turns. There is very good interaction between children and staff, enabling children to feel very secure and develop positive attitudes towards learning. There is a fun and positive atmosphere within the playgroup and children benefit from a good selection of play and practical learning activities.

Staff are very aware of children's developmental needs and are particularly attentive towards children's care needs. Children receive plenty of cuddles and physical affection, enabling children to feel comfortable and emotionally secure. Staff monitor children's development closely and carry out appropriate observations and assessments. This ensures staff recognise children's different learning needs and provide for these accordingly. Activities are appropriately adapted to ensure that all children can participate equally and are challenged effectively.

### **NURSERY EDUCATION**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and provide a fun, stimulating learning environment. Children develop very positive attitudes towards learning as staff offer plenty of opportunities for children to explore, develop curiosity and investigate their surroundings. This enables children to learn through practical, first-hand experiences. Children's play is valued and staff are committed to making learning fun for children, enabling them to develop and progress at their own level. Curriculum planning is detailed and all activities have clear learning intentions. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is monitored effectively. The key worker system enables staff to focus on individual children and carry out quality observations and assessments of children's play and learning. This informs future planning and enables staff to challenge all children effectively. Staff have a secure knowledge of all children's learning needs and skilfully adapt activities to support all children's learning needs. However, this approach is mainly informal and discussed and agreed between staff and is not always clearly documented on weekly plans. Therefore, documentation does not always indicate how children's learning needs have been formally planned for.

Staff make full use of the rural environment to enhance and extend children's learning. For example, children and staff enjoy spontaneous walks within the village and local area. Children excitedly explore nature within the nearby arboretum and enjoy imaginative activities, such as 'hunting for dinosaurs'. This practical, 'hands-on' approach brings learning alive for children and captures children's imagination and interests. Good use is made of all activities and children's

play within the daily routine. Staff talk to children constantly and engage in lengthy discussion and conversation. Staff use effective questioning techniques to encourage children to give explanation, consider their thoughts and ideas and use logic and reasoning. This stimulates children's language development and encourages children to develop confidence in communicating.

Children develop very good social skills. They clearly enjoy playgroup and develop positive relationships with their peers and the staff. Children are very polite and courteous to one another. For example, during a role play activity, a child said to a staff member, 'Please may we make a castle again?' Children develop generally good skills in becoming independent. They self-register on arrival, wash their hands after activities and manage toileting routines confidently. They make independent choices and begin to take care of their own needs. However, further opportunities for children to develop independence are not always utilised fully at snack time, as children do not always pour their own drinks and are not actively involved in the preparation of snacks.

Children talk confidently and fluently, conveying their needs effectively. They develop a keen interest in books and stories are skilfully incorporated into curriculum planning. For example, as part of topic work on Animals and Creatures, children used the story of 'Elmer' as a basis for activities. The rhyme 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', was used effectively to encourage creative and imaginative language. The book corner is well-presented, offering a comfortable and welcoming area for children to enjoy looking at books alone or to listen to stories read by staff. There are good opportunities for children to develop mark making skills. They access writing materials easily and enjoy making meaningful marks. Some children attempt to write their names on their art work and drawings and show a keen interest in letters and sounds.

Children have a good understanding of number and value. For example, one four-year-old noted how many children were present and confidently stated 'There are more boys here today than girls'. Staff successfully incorporate mathematical concepts into children's play. For example, whilst building towers with large blocks, staff encourage children to use comparative language to measure the heights of the towers. Children measure themselves against the towers and use appropriate language, such as 'bigger/smaller than'. Children count confidently and begin to attempt simple calculation. For example, they count how many bricks they have used to build towers and start to add numbers and make calculations.

Children have very good Information Technology skills. They benefit from weekly computer sessions taught by a specialist teacher and use laptop computers confidently, clearly understanding how they work. Children explore colour, pattern and shape using coloured wands, light boxes and kaleidoscopes. They understand how magnifying glasses work and enjoy exploring natural materials closely. Children regularly visit the local area and are familiar with aspects of the village, such as the school, shops, post office, church and arboretum. They develop an awareness of the role of others as they enjoy many visitors to the playgroup, such as a nurse, vet, community police officer and other emergency services.

Children sing songs enthusiastically and enjoy making their own musical instruments. They experiment with sounds as they bang pots and pans and make their own shakers. Children have very good opportunities to develop their creative skills. They access paints and drawing materials freely and enjoy mixing colours and making patterns. Evidence of children's art work reflects their own ideas and uses a range of techniques and media, such as collage, printing and modelling. Children experiment with a range of textures, such as sand, water, shaving foam and dough, helping children to use their senses and compare materials. There is strong provision

for role play with a good selection of supporting resources, such as tents, dressing up clothes and home play equipment. This encourages children to play imaginatively and recreate familiar scenarios.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging within the playgroup. Staff know all the children extremely well and are attentive towards their personal needs. Children feel listened to and valued by staff, encouraging strong self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. For example, staff respond to children's interests and views positively, particularly in the choice and selection of activities and play opportunities.

There is good provision for children to learn to respect the needs of others. They develop awareness of the wider world through topic work and see many positive images of diversity reflected within the playgroup environment. For example, children use role play food which reflects different cultures; they look at books with staff and understand that some stories are written in two different languages and celebrate festivals, such as Harvest Festival in the village church. This ensures that children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Parents provide a wealth of written information regarding their children's individual needs. The 'All About Me' sheet is comprehensive and enables staff to clearly understand children's personal needs. For example, information is obtained to ensure staff understand what makes children happy, what their favourite things are, what worries children, what frightens children and what might make children sad. This ensures that staff clearly understand, and can meet, children's personal needs.

Children' individual needs are supported well. Staff are experienced in supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and are committed to promoting a fully inclusive environment. This ensures equality of opportunity for all children.

Children behave very well. They clearly understand the playgroup routine and benefit from a very happy and positive atmosphere. Staff give children plenty of praise and positive encouragement and clearly celebrate children's achievements and progress. Children enjoy positive attention from staff and their efforts are always rewarded and acknowledged, helping children to clearly understand staff's expectations and recognise acceptable behaviour levels.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff provide very detailed written information for parents regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum and supporting information to promote children's general development. For example, staff present a wide range of written information, clearly displayed within the playgroup for parents' reference on a daily basis, helping parents to understand playgroup routines and child development initiatives. Good links are in place for children between playgroup and home. For example, children enjoy taking home 'Scruffy', the playgroup's bear, and parents contribute towards recording Scruffy's 'visit' in the playgroup scrapbook. This helps children to see partnerships between their parents and the playgroup. Effective strategies are in place to ensure that parents are kept informed of their child's progress. Staff organise parents' meetings and enable parents to see their child's written records at any time. Parents are also actively encouraged to become involved in the management committee and contribute towards topic work by sharing skills and visiting the playgroup.

The Compliments book is used well and reflects parents' positive comments regarding the playgroup. However, the complaints procedure is brief and does not include contact details for Ofsted, or information on the complaints log. This restricts parents from fully understanding the full complaints procedure.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The playgroup is managed by dedicated, fully committed staff, who work together extremely well as a strong, professional team. The leadership and management are good. The supervisors work well together with good support from the management committee. Staff are fully aware of their roles on a daily basis due to effective leadership from supervisors and clear documentation reflecting staff deployment and areas of responsibility. Staff development is seen as a priority and unqualified staff are encouraged to undertake training to develop their skills and enhance their knowledge. Most training is kept up-to-date. Clear evaluations on playgroup routines are carried out on a weekly basis to ensure continuous improvement in learning opportunities for children.

The daily routine is organised well and offers a busy, fun and stimulating environment for children. An appropriate staff induction programme ensures that all new staff, students and visitors clearly understand playgroup policies and procedures, which contributes towards the smooth organisation of the group.

Written documentation is available and playgroup policies are regularly reviewed and updated. Most policies contain all necessary information, although the complaints procedure lacks some detail. Children's records are stored securely and confidentially.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last Care inspection, one recommendation was raised. This related to the staff induction programme and the key worker system. Staff have addressed this. There is now a comprehensive staff induction programme in place ensuring that all new staff and students clearly understand the playgroup policies and procedures. A key worker system has also been introduced to ensure that children's individual care and learning needs are appropriately monitored.

At the last Nursery Education inspection, three points for consideration were raised. These related to the staff appraisal system and the format of curriculum planning. Staff have partly met these points. Staff development is now given priority and an appropriate appraisal system is in place to address training and development needs. Curriculum planning has been improved to reflect clear learning intentions for all activities, ensuring that children's learning towards the early learning goals is appropriately planned for. However, planning records still do not clearly indicate how activities will be extended/adapted to meet the needs of different children. This remains a weakness in provision.

## **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 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 all supervisors regularly update their knowledge of appropriate Safeguarding Children procedures
- review the written complaints policy to ensure that parents are made aware of new regulations relating to a complaints log and are informed of the contact details for Ofsted

#### **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):

- review the format of short term curriculum planning to indicate how focus activities will meet children's individual learning needs
- review the format of snack time to enable children to further develop their independence

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)