

Mosterton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 139351 |
| Inspection date | 07 June 2007 |
| Inspector | Brenda Joan Flewitt |
| Setting Address | Village Hall, Mosterton, Beaminster, Dorset, DT8 3HG |
| Telephone number | 01935 891678 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Mosterton Playgroup Committee |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | Sessional care |

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Mosterton Playgroup is a parent committee run group and has been open since 1981. It operates from the village hall in Mosterton, near Beaminster, in rural North West Dorset. The playgroup uses the main hall and extra room, plus toilet facilities and the kitchen. There is a fully enclosed outside area at the back of the hall which is mainly laid to grass. The group is open from 09.15 to 12.00 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings in term time. There is a lunch club offered following each session until 13.00. The group serves the local, mainly rural, community of families from a variety of backgrounds.

A maximum of 25 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 25 children on roll aged between two and five years. Of these, 20 receive funding for early education. The playgroup support children who use English as an additional language.

There are three permanent members of staff who hold relevant childcare qualifications, supported by five bank staff, who work as and when required.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted. They learn good procedures for their own personal hygiene which include washing hands after using the toilet and before handling food. Children are protected from the spread of infection through staff procedures and routine. For example, children are encouraged to use tissues which are readily available and dispose of them appropriately. There is a clear sickness policy which informs parents that children must not attend if they have an infectious illness. The recommended exclusion times are displayed for reference. Children's medication and accidents are well managed. There are three members of staff with up-to-date first aid training, resources are easily accessible both in the building and on outings, and the required records are completed appropriately.

Children enjoy a healthy lifestyle. They take part in outside activities on a daily basis, dressing appropriately for the weather, which means they get regular fresh air and exercise. Children use a wide range of equipment that promotes physical development. They practise manoeuvring a variety of wheeled vehicles including tricycles, scooters and bicycles. Some enjoy bouncing on a trampette, or throwing and catching a ball. Children concentrate well on using smaller equipment to transfer water and sand, pouring from jugs and bottles to smaller containers or transporting wet sand or logs in a trailer. Outside play also encourages children to experiment with musical sounds as they use the 'music line' of pots and pans with various 'beaters'. Children make choices from healthy options at snack time which includes items such as pitta bread, cucumber, cheese and fruit. They can drink whenever they are thirsty as there are resources made readily available to them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and learn in safe and secure premises where most hazards are identified and minimised. The good security measures makes sure that children do not leave the building unsupervised and are protected from uninvited visitors. Staff carry out regular risk assessments to ensure that the environment is safe for children, however, stinging nettles pose a risk to children as they play outside. Children move around freely and in safety as they choose their activities because the space available is organised effectively. They use furniture, equipment and play provision that is well organised and kept in good condition.

Children learn about their own safety through discussion and routine. For example, children spontaneously put on hats and apply sun cream before they go out to play, knowing that it is to protect their skin from the burning sun. They know what is expected if they must leave the building in an emergency because they are involved in practising the escape plan on a regular basis. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and fire exits are clearly marked. This all contributes towards children's safety in a real situation. When on outings, children are kept safe through staff routine procedures that include a risk assessment, parental permission, increased adult-to-child ratio and making sure that a phone and contact numbers are easily accessible. Children learn about how to stay safe while walking, which includes crossing roads safely.

Staff's good understanding of recognising signs of abuse and what to do in the event of a concern helps to protect children from harm. There is suitable information available for reference and existing injuries are recorded as routine.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and secure. They enjoy the time they spend at playgroup and make positive relationships with staff and each other. For example, children are jubilant as they join in the mini celebration of an up-and-coming-wedding. They enjoy throwing confetti, singing 'happy wedding day to you' and savouring the home made cake, which they are fascinated to hear was made using eggs that were still warm from being under a hen. Children are cared for by staff who know the children well and value them as individuals. Children use a good range of equipment and resources which are arranged at the beginning of each session to make a welcoming and stimulating environment. Children are encouraged to develop independence in making choices and in practical skills such as managing their own clothes. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework effectively to plan and assess the progress for the younger children.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Key staff have a secure working knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They have clear responsibilities and use an effective system to plan and assess children's progress across the six areas of learning. Therefore, children are involved in a broad range of activities and experiences which promote their development, so they make good progress in their learning. Children enjoy purposeful interaction from the adults who work with them which means they maintain interest and are challenged appropriately to help them reach the next step.

Staff effectively use topics and regular themes including number, letter, shape and colour of the week. They include all the areas of learning in meaningful activities which motivates children to learn. Children enjoy the subject of 'Mini beasts'. They learn about science and nature as they go on 'bug' hunts, and discover the differences in various insects and creatures they find, as they look at them with magnifying glasses. They use a range of tools and materials as they recreate images of insects like butterflies or caterpillars, or when making a 'wormery' to take home to observe the changes. One child excitedly talks about the worm 'digging a hole'. Children choose various materials to join together to make models of creatures like the ones they can see in a book, skilfully using scissors to cut, glue and sticky tape to join, and counting skills to find out how many legs the insect has. One child decides to change her model as it looked more like traffic lights. Children enjoy using the role play equipment which has been set up as an 'underground tunnel'. They crawl from one end to the other pretending to be creatures they have learned about.

Children use language well to communicate. Many are confident to initiate conversations and enjoy talking about events in their lives, particularly at the 'news' session. One child explains to his friends about his visit to the circus where he saw 'crazy clowns and crazy pirates', another talks about how a 'forager gets blocked with wet grass'. Children learn to recognise their written names through daily activities and some are writing their names with some correctly formed letters. Children develop a real sense of maths as they count the number of children present, play number games and recognise shapes within the environment. For example, during a musical game children recognise colours and shapes as they choose a floor tile to land on. Children use technology on a daily basis in various forms. They are developing good computer skills as they

use a mouse to move images on the screen to solve problems. Some children love to dress up, look at their reflection in a mirror and move to music, selecting a tape for themselves.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave well. They learn about the 'Golden Rules' for working in harmony. For example, a child knows that 'you must walk over to someone when you want to speak to them, not shout'. They take turns as part of the routine as well as during games, and are encouraged to display good manners. Children respond favourably to being given tasks of responsibility such as handing round the food or putting out the name cards at snack time. They receive much praise and encouragement from staff for their efforts and achievements which helps build their self-esteem.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging to a community. They like to see photos displayed in the playgroup of themselves and their friends, enjoying previous activities. They enjoy a good variety of outings to places like a dairy farm and a fruit farm and occasionally llamas from a nearby farm walk to the playgroup. Children learn about the animals and produce. People from the local community visit, such as police and fire officers. Children start to gain an awareness of the wider world as they explore festivals such as Diwali, and try foods from various countries. All this helps children to have a positive awareness about the world around them. Children and their families who use English as an additional language are well supported and fully included. There are good systems in place to identify and support children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the positive relationship between staff and parents. Parents are supplied with useful information about the setting which includes activities offered, the curriculum and how children learn. Parents are well informed about their child's progress. There are daily opportunities for exchanging information about children's individual needs, as well as formal sessions to discuss the progress records. Staff obtain some information about what each child 'can do' when they start, but this is not specific to inform their starting points in the Foundation Stage. The book bags are an effective way to link home and playgroup as children choose a book to take home to share with their family. Parents are welcomed to attend sessions as a parent-helper which allows them insight as to how their children play and learn at playgroup. They have the opportunity to have an active voice in their child's care and education as a member of the committee.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by experienced staff. They are an enthusiastic team who work well together to provide smoothly run sessions, where children know what to expect and therefore, settle quickly. There are generally good staff recruitment procedures to ensure that new staff are suitable to work with children. However, there is no clear system to obtain information about health. The effective induction policy means that staff are well informed to carry out policies and procedures that promote children's welfare. The good organisation of the premises, resources, staff deployment and structure of the session means that children play and learn in a generally safe environment, take part in a broad range of experiences both inside and outside.

All the required documentation and records are in place, appropriately organised and completed clearly.

Leadership and management is good. Although the committee are in the process of changing officers, there are clear roles and responsibilities and written policies for reference. There are good systems in place for monitoring the provision for nursery education. These include the management committee members attending sessions on a regular basis as part of the parent rota, and regular staff appraisals which help identify training required. However, the information obtained from parents does not specifically relate to the Foundation Stage. The playgroup enjoys positive links with the local school which helps towards the children's smooth transition as they start school. Children visit the school in the term before they start so they become familiar with staff and premises, therefore boosting their confidence. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care inspection recommended that all policies and procedures include the required details, especially medicine records and policies for lost children and child protection.

All the policies and procedures include the required detail to promote children's health and safety.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that there were more opportunities for older and more able children to be challenged in physical activities.

There is a good range of large equipment available used on a daily basis to promote children's large muscle skills. These include a climbing frame, various wheeled vehicles and balancing equipment. The children also visit the nearby play park where they use larger equipment.

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.

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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):

- ensure hazardous plants are inaccessible to children in the outside play area
- make sure that staff recruitment procedures cover all aspects of staff's suitability.

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):

- increase the information obtained from parents to assess children's starting points.

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