

Creswick Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY296091
Inspection date	16 November 2007
Inspector	Jill Nugent
Setting Address	Creswick Primary School, Sir John Newsom Way, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL7 4FJ
Telephone number	01707 323038
E-mail	
Registered person	Creswick 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Creswick Playgroup registered in 2004 and operates from its new setting in the Oak Nursery classroom in Creswick Primary School in Welwyn Garden City. The playgroup is open on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons, from 13.15 to 15.30, during term time. Children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. Currently there are 26 children on roll and of these, 10 children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language.

A total of six staff are employed by the playgroup, three of whom, including the leader, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup has achieved the Hertfordshire Quality Standards award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well because there are good procedures in place. All medical records are maintained appropriately. Children are protected from infection as staff exclude any children who are ill. In the event of an accident children are well taken care of as staff are well qualified in first aid and have good access to first aid equipment. They have appropriate hygiene practices in place to reduce the risk of cross-infection. Children are becoming aware of good hygiene themselves and know to wash their hands before eating snack.

Children learn about healthy eating as they are offered a variety of fresh fruit at snack times. They enjoy the opportunity to eat their snacks in small groups and this enables them to join in conversation and learn social skills. Staff ensure that children with special diets eat appropriately as all adults are made aware of their needs. Children find out about different foods in organised food tasting activities. There is drinking water available at all times to help prevent children from becoming dehydrated during play.

Children enjoy very good opportunities for physical activity outdoors. There is a wide range of interesting resources in the outdoor play area which stimulate children to take part in all sorts of activities. For example, they ride wheeled vehicles, make marks with large chalks and pretend to water the plants using large watering cans. Children learn to negotiate space as they push toy buggies around or run in the wind with streamers. Overall children benefit from the opportunities for fresh air and exercise all year round.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a particularly welcoming environment. The nursery classroom is bright and spacious with colourful displays on the walls. There is sufficient indoor and outdoor space for a range of activities to be made available. All resources are easily accessible to children in low level storage units. Children keep secure in the setting because the inner doors are fitted with extra high handles and the outer gates are kept locked.

Children's safety is promoted because staff carry out regular risk assessments and daily safety checks. Any new activities are risk assessed before children participate. There are various additional safety measures in place to prevent children from accessing hazardous materials or electrical sockets. Children are well supervised at the beginning and end of sessions. Good fire precautions are in place and regular fire drills are organised so that children know what to do in the case of an emergency.

There is a wide range of safe and suitable resources, all of which are attractive and interesting for children of different ages. Staff regularly check the condition of the resources to ensure that children can play safely. Children are becoming aware of personal safety as staff gently remind children of safety rules. Children learn to use tools safely, for example, when cutting up fruit. If using the outdoor adventure equipment staff follow set procedures to keep children safe. Children are well safeguarded because staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and know what to do if they have any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and happy at playgroup. They are curious to see what is on offer when they arrive and talk confidently with staff about what they are doing. Staff develop their conversation by asking questions and children readily describe related experiences. They often become absorbed in their own explorative play, for example, using mark-making tools or experimenting with sand and water. Children get on well with each other and happily share resources, such as books and small world figures. They benefit from individual attention at times and this helps to boost their self-confidence and esteem. At group times they enjoy getting together and singing familiar songs.

Children are involved in a range of activities which support their development and learning. Staff make use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework in their planning of activities and in this way meet the needs of the younger children effectively. There are good opportunities for children to join in imaginative play and to be creative. Staff enhance children's enjoyment of freely chosen activities through interacting and extending play situations. For example, children's experience of light and dark is enhanced through the involvement of staff as they use torches to explore. Younger children benefit from staff's flexible approach to small group activities, allowing them to explore in their own way, for instance, when painting, chalking and cutting. Therefore, children enjoy a variety of learning experiences.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff plan the educational programme around various themes, developing each one through adult-led activities so as to focus children's learning. The written plans include relevant learning intentions and are evaluated in order to guide future planning. There is a highly-organised system in place for observing children and this works effectively in providing an overview of each child's development. Consequently, staff are able to differentiate their planning to meet the needs of all children.

Staff make good use of small group times to focus children's learning. They explain activities clearly to children and offer them choices within each activity. This approach encourages children to participate and stimulates their interest. Children enjoy being able to access these activities for free choice play throughout the rest of the session. They develop independence as they select resources for a purpose and learn to concentrate, for example, when mixing paints.

Children are encouraged to develop communication skills through discussion. They learn new words, such as animal names and are encouraged to find animals whose name belongs with a particular letter sound. At the drawing table they explore mark-making and are beginning to attempt the writing of letters and words. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. As a result children are developing useful skills for early reading and writing.

Children are becoming confident counters as they work out how many are present each day or count objects, such as spots, during creative activities. They are learning to recognise numerals on cards and dice when playing board games. They find out about different shapes when making pictures and models. For instance, they use a variety of materials to make hats, cakes and houses. In map-making exercises children learn about their local environment. They develop technological skills whilst using the whiteboard and computers to support their learning.

Children have good opportunities to develop creative and physical skills. They learn to observe closely when creating pictures of flowers and goldfish. They have fun printing with potatoes

or their own feet. Outdoors they like taking part in large-scale activities, such as painting in different ways to create a huge firework picture. These activities help children to use their imagination and learn new techniques. Children take part in activities which help them to practise physical skills, for example, aiming, throwing and catching. When using the adventure equipment they increase their control and co-ordination using their bodies in different ways to travel.

Overall children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and included in the setting. They receive a welcome each day as they gather on the carpet and are offered equal access to all activities. The nursery class setting provides a stimulating environment where children have much choice. They develop a sense of belonging and keep busy throughout the afternoon. They enjoy talking about themselves and their families. When talking about children's differing backgrounds they develop a knowledge of diversity.

Children are well supported by staff who are available to help out but also encourage personal independence. There are good procedures in place for supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff seek advice from other professionals and offer one-to-one support if necessary. They devise individual learning plans for children so as to meet their needs effectively.

Children's behaviour is good. Staff are good role models and encourage a calm environment. They have a set of simple rules for playgroup and children are well aware of their boundaries. They follow instructions well, learn to share fairly and help to tidy up afterwards. Consequently, children develop a good awareness of right and wrong. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The playgroup liaises closely with parents and carers, providing clear information about their policies and procedures in a brochure. Parents may help out during a session if they wish and are given guidelines as to what they can and cannot do whilst at playgroup. When registering children they provide information about any individual needs so that staff can offer the appropriate care.

The partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is good. The newsletters include information about the current theme and written plans are displayed on the notice board. Staff discuss children's development with parents when they start playgroup and exchange information about their progress at regular consultations. However, general information about the Foundation Stage and weekly activities is not always made sufficiently clear so that parents can become involved in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The playgroup's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. All the necessary policies are in place and the written planning is kept up to date and readily available. The documentation provides a sound framework for children's care and education. However, the written complaints procedures has not been updated to take into

account changes in the regulations. If parents are unaware of how to raise a concern children's continuity of care may be affected.

Staff are well qualified and committed to the ongoing improvement of their provision. There are good employment and induction procedures in place. New staff are initially mentored to aid their knowledge and understanding of procedures. Staff make good use of the available space to allow children a variety of choice in different learning areas. They follow a set daily routine and are all aware of their roles and responsibilities. Since the previous inspection members of staff have attended a variety of training courses, for example, Child Protection, Food Hygiene, Speech and Language and Areas of Learning. Children benefit from their acquired knowledge and skills. Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The leader works closely with her deputy and involves all staff in planning the programme and assessing children's progress. Staff act as key workers, maintaining their own paperwork, although the leader oversees this to ensure consistency. She encourages staff to evaluate and monitor their provision, noting points of development in written action plans. Her leadership contributes to children's good progress.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the playgroup was asked to ensure that relevant documentation is regularly checked against the National Standards. All policies and procedures are now reviewed regularly.

At the previous nursery education inspection the playgroup was asked to extend opportunities for children to increase their awareness of letters and sounds and mathematical calculation. Children now have a variety of opportunities to learn about letters and sounds, especially through the introduction of a 'letter of the week'. Staff increase children's awareness of calculation through organising counting and sorting activities and singing number rhymes.

This response has contributed to an improvement in the learning outcomes for children.

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):

- update the written complaints procedure in line with changes to regulations in the National Standards.

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):

- clarify the information available to parents about the Foundation Stage of learning and weekly activities.

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