

# Waterbeach Community Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	221774
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Caroline Wright
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Waterbeach Playhouse, High Street, Waterbeach, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB25 9JU
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<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Waterbeach Community 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?

Waterbeach Community Playgroup is run by trustees and a management committee made up of parents of children at the playgroup. It opened in 1972 and operates from The Play House, which is a purpose-built building on the site of Waterbeach Community School. It is situated in the centre of Waterbeach in Cambridgeshire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11:45 with afternoon sessions on Mondays and Fridays from 12:15 until 14:15 for younger children; optional lunch sessions for older children are available at certain times of the year from 11:45 until 13:00. The playgroup is open during school term times only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 43 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs six members of staff: three of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications; three members of staff are working towards a early year's qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children show an excellent understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene, which they learn through regular routines such as washing their hands before eating and sensitive reminders from their key workers when necessary. They confidently declare that washing your hands 'gets rid of germs'. Staff act as excellent role models, wiping down tables and washing their own hands before serving food, to help children to stay healthy. Highly effective procedures such as through cleaning of bathrooms and the kitchen, are carried out routinely by staff and as a result all areas of the playgroup premises are scrupulously clean.

Children successfully learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through interesting, practical experiences. They are able to run around and exert themselves outdoors in the garden whenever they want. This helps them to learn the importance of regular fresh air and exercise. Children flow freely between the indoor and outdoor areas and they develop new skills in an environment that suits their personal learning style. They learn new physical skills such as riding bicycles or climbing on the climbing frame and access a superb range of small tools and equipment to acquire new manipulative skills. Children know when they are 'hot' or 'tired and thirsty' and come indoors for a rest when they need to. Well planned activities such as 'hospital' role-play, visits by the dentist and regular sessions in the school gym effectively help children to learn about how their bodies work.

Children's nutritional needs are extremely well met. The playgroup staff plan a varied range of snacks for children. Food is freshly prepared each day and takes account of children's allergies and special diets. Key workers organise visits to the playgroup by the nutritionist and by children's parents to introduce new foods such as 'smoothies' or 'Danish breakfasts' to the children. Food technology activities form an integral part of the curriculum plans and children learn positive attitudes towards food when they prepare 'ants on logs' or make pizza's for their snack. Children can help themselves to a drink of water from the water jug on the side when they want one so that they remain well hydrated and can think effectively. In addition, parents are provided with healthy eating recipes to help them to provide suitable meals for their children at home. As a result, children talk with understanding with adults about 'healthy food' that 'makes you grow big and strong.'

The needs of children under three-years-old are very well met by adults who have a good understanding of their developmental needs. Key workers link their observations of children's progress to the Health Visitor's checks, working collaboratively with other professionals to promote children's overall development and well-being. If the children become unwell or have an accident whilst they are in the care of the playgroup, excellent records are in place to make sure that very good care is given. An ongoing programme for first aid training ensures that all staff are fully aware of how to provide appropriate care in the event of an emergency.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children move around in complete safety under the expert supervision of the playgroup staff. Children show that they clearly know about keeping themselves safe when they talk about how to 'hold on tight' on the climbing frame or notice the 'very sharp' scissors at the 'make and do' table. Adults help younger children to learn about safety, reminding them that they should 'be careful' when they climb up to the table at snack time. Children use a very good range of interesting resources that are appropriate for their age and stage of development, and these are rigorously checked by the playgroup staff to ensure they are in good condition and are completely safe for children to use. Furthermore, staff provide interesting activities to help children to learn to keep themselves safe outside of the playgroup. For example, they set up role play scenarios about 'emergency' play where children dial 999 to call for the ambulance or the police.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by staff who have a superb understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. They receive clear information about how to promote children's best interests in the event of concerns when they first start to work at the playgroup during their induction.

A wide range of written policies and effective procedures are in place, including regular fire drills to help children know what to do in the case of an emergency evacuation of the premises. In addition, key workers greet each child individually each day and record the times of arrival: the outdoor play area is extremely secure and a security button in the entrance area prevents children from leaving the premises without adult supervision. An excellent risk assessment has been carried out by an independent expert: staff have acted swiftly to minimise any hazards that the process identified and superb daily checks are carried out before children enter the premises each day. This effectively promotes children's ongoing safety and well-being.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and enjoy their time at the setting. All children join in eagerly with the freely-accessible activities such as the drain pipe 'tracks and runs' set up in the garden or castle small world play which are set out by staff each day. They explore sand and water and make 'spaghetti for tea' using dough and forcing tools with the sensitive support of their key workers. They freely access both the indoor and outdoor environment, regardless of the weather, thereby allowing them to pursue their own interests effectively in their preferred learning environment.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children use their imagination in a range of situations such as the 'secret dens' in the garden or playing with the dinosaurs. They freely explore their creativity in art and craft, cutting and sticking or painting with their fingers. Children use number names in their play and count groups of items reliably when they play with 'bears and boots' with their key workers. They communicate effectively and use a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas and talk about what they know. They talk to adults about their thoughts and anticipate what might happen next: 'I'm making a transformer boat; this is the pipe with another pipe inside', using mathematical positional language with understanding. Children discuss what they do at home and talk about their families with

understanding. They talk about 'visitors' who 'come to stay for four weeks.' They learn about the natural world, monitoring the changing seasons and the days of the week at circle time, noticing patterns and changes in their environment.

Children look at books alone and with adults: they turn pages from front to back carefully and listen with interest to stories. They enjoy music and movement, eagerly take part in 'Jazzercise' and sing their favourite songs to each other as they play. However, children do not have consistent access to suitable resources to enable them to read and write for a purpose or to use numbers and calculations in play situations.

All of the staff working with children have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage 'areas of learning' and how activities contribute to children's learning. Key-workers regularly observe children playing so that they can record their achievements and plan a balanced range of interesting activities that help children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. They ask effective questions and give children time to think and to show key workers what they know. They interact very well with children and work alongside them for much of the time, making excellent use of resources and accommodation, promoting children's independent learning for most of the time. However, they do not use their observations of what children enjoy to enable them to plan the next steps that build on what children already know. The written plans for circle time and outdoor play activities lack detail. As a result, some activities lack challenge for older or more able children and opportunities for children to learn through daily routines are missed. For example, adults do not always ask children find their name cards or to write their name on their artwork; they miss opportunities to help children extend their understanding of mathematics at snack time by preparing the snack for the children. Although a 'graphics' table is set up everyday, staff do not always provide mark making equipment or mathematics equipment in the role play house or outdoors. This affects children's learning.

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

The provision is good.

Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet key workers and each other upon arrival at the playgroup. Children help themselves to additional resources and initiate their own activities for the majority of the session. They are well motivated by the very good range of toys and activities planned for them to use each day. Children's work is on display and they receive very good encouragement from key workers to try out their own ideas in art and craft activities. As a result, children are very confident and show high levels of self-esteem.

Adults work with other professionals and parents to support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they make good progress. A very good system is in place to support children who speak English as an additional language: key workers learn 'key words' in the child's home language which they translate into English and use these to make cue cards to help children to become confident communicators. Adults use a range of good strategies to help children to behave well and to understand what is expected of them. For example, a 'stop/go' poster near the door informs children whether or not they are able to play outside; a sand timer helps children to know when it is their turn with a toy or how long they have got left to play. As a result, children's behaviour during 'free flow' play parts of the session is good. However, the organisation of snack time and key worker focus activities does not encourage decision making or promote positive behaviour. For example, adults call children to come for a snack and key worker group time regardless of whether they are engrossed in active learning

at a self chosen activity. Children then wait for adults to serve them a snack or for their turn at the activity and become bored because they are not taking an active role. This affects learning.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children play with small world figures, look at books and take part in a wide range of cultural and religious celebrations to help them develop positive attitudes towards diversity. Children are encouraged to take part in community activities such as the Feast Day Parade, and to talk about their families and what they do at home. These activities help them to learn about each other's family culture and to develop a sense of belonging to a larger community. They share experiences during circle time discussions; adults encourage children to respect each other's needs and to use conventions such as 'please' and 'thank you'. Children work together co-operatively during group activities; they know that 'we have to share, don't we?'

The partnership with parents and carers is good. It contributes effectively to children's care and to the progress of children who receive early education. Parents receive regular information about nursery activities in newsletters and on the notice board, so that they can support their child's learning at home. An effective key worker system enables parents to share information informally on a daily basis and to discuss children's progress records regularly so that children's individual needs can be well met.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the playgroup promotes positive outcomes for children. All areas of the physical environment are attractive and provide plenty of space for children to move around independently and safely. A rigorous procedure is in place to ensure that all staff and members of the committee are suitable to work with children. The induction programme for new staff ensures that everyone is fully aware of procedures for child protection and knows about safeguarding children. All of the legally required documents, which contribute to children's health, safety and well-being, are in place and regularly reviewed. However, information to enable parents or carers to contact the regulator in the event of any concerns about the provision needs to be updated.

Staff engage in a suitable range of ongoing training to enable them to provide a balanced curriculum for the children in their group. They also attend training to help them to learn about effective techniques for managing behaviour and how to care with children with special learning needs. However, the organisation of some activities during the session limits children's independence and also leads to children displaying some challenging behaviour. This affects learning.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The manager and staff have regular opportunities to meet as a team to share information and exchange practice ideas. In addition, the playgroup team act upon advice from the support teacher in the local authority to develop their practice. However, planning of activities for children is not effective in ensuring that all children are appropriately challenged and they miss opportunities to extend children's knowledge of early reading, writing and mathematics in everyday routines and in play situations.

Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to acquire details of Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) and incorporate practice and procedure into the health and hygiene policy; develop and implement an induction programme for new staff and to introduce procedures to be followed in the event of a child not being collected at the end of the session. The new procedures for health and hygiene include details of how to report significant accidents using RIDDOR guidance. The new induction programme for staff is highly effective in ensuring that all members of the team understand their role, particularly in connection with safeguarding children's welfare in the event of concerns. A written procedure has been devised to help staff to know what to do if a child is not collected at the end of a session; this includes contacting Social Services or the Police for further advice. These actions have improved the organisation of the provision and have a positive impact upon the safety of children.

At the last inspection of funded early education the provider agreed to show how the playgroup will actively promote the use of books, both for enjoyment and for reference; set up opportunities which will specifically challenge the children to question and problem solve and to provide more opportunities for children to be creative by setting up activities in which they can freely express themselves. The playgroup now takes children to the school library to borrow books, which they take home and share with their parents each week. In addition, children are able to access an attractive book area freely and enjoy sharing stories with adults at circle time. Children are able to access the 'make and do' trolley freely during the session. This provides them with very good opportunities to develop their imagination and explore their creativity. Children freely access all areas of the provision during free-flow play sessions and have suitable opportunities to solve their own problems and they demonstrate this when they suggest that 'I need to push' if three children in the bike trailer are 'too heavy' for one child to pull. However, some opportunities for children to be challenged are missed. This will be carried forward for further improvement in a recommendation following this inspection.

## **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 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):

- update the complaints procedure to provide parents and carers with current contact details of the regulator
- improve the organisation of key worker focus activities and large group activities such as snack time, to meet children's individual learning needs and to promote positive behaviour.

### **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):

- improve the programme for communication language and literacy and mathematics: provide children with regular, planned opportunities to develop early reading and writing skills and to use numbers, measurement and calculations in play situations and in daily routines both indoors and out
- continue to develop the system of planning activities and assessment of children's progress: use key workers observations of what children enjoy to plan activities that interest each child and provide appropriate challenges for older and more able children; include clear planning for outdoor and circle time activities so that opportunities for learning are not missed.

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)