

Tate House Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119621
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Inspector	Diane Ashplant

Setting Address	Mace Street, Cranbrook Estate, Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London, E2 0RA
Telephone number	020 8981 2402
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Registered person	Tate House 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?

Tate House Playgroup first opened in 1968. It operates from a converted ground floor building which is located in the Bethnal Green area of London. A maximum of 12 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup opens five days a week term time only and sessions are from 9:00 to 11:30 and 12:30 to 15:00. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 22 children from two to four years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area and attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are two full-time staff members currently working with the children and both hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local Early Years services.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is well promoted through regular opportunities to play outside in the fresh air where they often go in and out as they choose. The playgroup has a good selection of resources to encourage the development of children's physical skills and co-ordination such as different wheeled toys, a climbing frame and balancing items. Children enjoy running and hopping races and practise their throwing skills as they aim balls into the net. Children are cared for in a clean and hygienic environment where staff carry out suitable procedures such as the use of antibacterial spray on surfaces and have reasonable nappy changing facilities. Children are beginning to learn about personal hygiene through the daily routine as they are generally encouraged to wash their hands as they freely access the toilet. Children's health is protected in the event of an accident or illness as staff are aware of appropriate action to take and the manager holds a current first aid qualification. Information about infectious diseases is shared with parents and there are appropriate systems in place for recording accidents and medication.

Staff are aware of the importance of providing a diet which promotes children's health and so offer children a choice of fresh fruit at snack time which is regularly supplemented by the parents. Children also have drinks of water at this time although they do not have free access so they can independently drink when they need which may mean they are not always sufficiently hydrated. Staff are aware that some children have dietary needs and will consult carefully with parents and record these to ensure all staff know.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is well protected as staff are alert to potential hazards and have taken appropriate action to protect children against these. They are constantly vigilant and remind children of any possible risks, for example, to be careful if the floor is wet or as they play outside and this helps children to develop a sense of responsibility for their own and others' safety. Children are cared for in a building which is fully secure and staff are aware of visitors and will check out any whom they do not know. All visitors and parents wait at the gate which is only unlocked as individual children arrive. The manager is aware of the need to have a suitable building where children can move around easily and safely and she has used the imminent refurbishment to highlight any issues so that children's safety will be more effectively protected. All toys and equipment are selected with regard to safety and suitability and these are well-organised and regularly checked to ensure they are maintained in a good condition. Many are stored in low-level units so that children can easily and safely select them to promote independent play choices. All required policies and procedures, such as regular fire drills are in place to protect children at all times.

Children's welfare is paramount at all times as staff are aware of significant signs and symptoms to be alert to and of their responsibility to pass on any serious concerns appropriately. Both staff members have completed additional training to highlight their awareness as regards to child protection. Parents are informed of the nursery's responsibility to safeguard their children and the policy statement is displayed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a compact and cosy setting by staff who know and relate well to them. The space available has been well organised to provide a play and learning environment with different areas of opportunity for the children. It is decorated with colourful examples of the children's work which encourages children to enter with confidence and happily engage in activities of their choice. Staff interact very well with the children and engage enthusiastically in their play, appropriately supporting them as required. There is a good balance of free and more adult-directed play and the session always includes some group sessions and regular outdoor play experiences. Children are able to freely select their own choices and also able to decide whether they want to play inside or out, even changing mid-session. Staff are supportive and engage well with the children, stimulating their learning through the effective use of questions and suggestions. Children are given freedom to explore their own preferences, invited to make choices and allowed to express their own creativity in their individual way, such as through the many different craft activities. The programme also includes trips into the local community and visitors to the setting which provide children and staff with different and real experiences to enjoy. Staff spend lots of purposeful time watching and interacting with children and know them well. Children's progress is routinely monitored by staff who use these observations to identify children's individual levels and then to plan for their next steps.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enter the setting with enthusiasm and engage eagerly in the different activities set out for them. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a good understanding of how young children learn and are skilled at using routine opportunities to maximise children's learning and inspire their thinking. They have created a learning environment which covers all areas of development and is supported by a wide range of appropriate and interesting resources. The flexible routine provides children with lots of opportunities to make their own choices. Staff relate well to children and use most opportunities within the session to engage them, linking into their own personal experiences and feelings. Children have daily opportunities to play outside and staff are eager to extend the learning opportunities here with plans to create a sensory and growing area and fixed boards for children to paint and chalk. Children know the routine well and confidently participate in circle sessions and snack time, exchanging conversation with staff and their companions. The staff know the children well and use observations to monitor their progress towards the early learning goals. They have recently adopted a different and more specific way of recording observations and staff have already recognised the benefit of this in identifying more precisely children's individual levels. They use these methods to plan for the children's next steps and discuss areas to focus on to challenge or support each child. Staff enjoy sharing activities with the children and their enthusiasm reflects back on the children who are usually attentive and eager to respond. They use topics effectively to link into different areas such as the story of 'Icicle Bicycle' which led to lots of creative activities and discussions about feelings and change which staff then used to prepare and support children through the imminent change of premises.

Most children talk with confidence to staff and friends and chatter away as they engage in role play in the home corner or talk with friends at the snack table. Children are developing a real love of books as they independently choose their own or read together with a staff member. They listen attentively at story time and remember parts of the story, even taking the role of the leader and reading the book to the group. This is made more interesting by the use of puppets or other resources. For example, lights are switched off and children lie down and

imagine the sky at night as they look at their pictures of moons and stars on the ceiling. Children freely access the writing table where they draw and mark-make and are beginning to recognise letters and their names as they select their name card and try and identify others. Children have a wide range of creative opportunities with different materials and are allowed to freely explore their own creativity as they learn to make patterns, mix colours and make designs from such items as paint, glue, glitter, buttons and cotton buds. They all enjoy imaginative play in the role play corner as they dress up in different clothes, share in imaginary meals or go shopping with lots of bags. Children benefit from visitors to the playgroup such as actors and musicians who encourage them to explore and express their own feelings and inner creativity.

Children are learning to play well together and share toys, with some able to confidently negotiate turn-taking for themselves and others. Children have good choices as they decide where and how they play and are developing social skills such as learning to dress themselves for outdoor play, pulling sleeves up so they do not get wet and practising good manners. They are able to extend their knowledge of the local community and the wider world as they enjoy activities around different festivals and take trips to different places, sometimes enjoying riding the tube train. Children have lots of opportunities to build, construct and sequence as they make patterns with buttons and identify the different sizes or concentrate on puzzles, showing pleasure when they complete these. Children have some opportunities to use numbers through the daily routine as they enthusiastically join in number rhymes and use their fingers to identify how many are left. Staff are patient with them allowing all children to engage in their own time. Staff use opportunities as they arise to spontaneously develop children's thinking, using things they know and are confident with first to help them settle and feel secure. For example, they identified one child's fascination with cars to use this to develop learning in other ways, such as number and letter recognition. In this way they adapt the routine to meet the needs of all children, enabling them to fully participate in what is available. Children are beginning to learn how things work as they use the telephone or the computer and staff are planning to extend their knowledge of nature and how things grow. Children are well occupied and participate happily in the range of activities available. They are supported by caring and attentive staff who clearly enjoy sharing time with the children and are committed to give them a range of different and interesting experiences to encourage their development in all areas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children at this playgroup are well known by the staff who spend lots of time talking with parents and children as they settle in, which is very flexibly managed to suit their individual needs. Children are regularly engaged in conversation by staff who listen well and encourage them to share information about their family and home such as discussions around Mother's Day which helps children develop a sense of their own uniqueness. Children enter happily into the setting and quickly engage themselves in the different activities which are either laid out on tables or in different parts of the room and staff respect their own preferences. Children have a good range of resources to support their play which cover all areas of learning and reflect the diversity of the wider world. Many of these are usually accessible at low-levels so children can independently select them. Children enjoy visits into the community such as the park, or go on trips to the farm or the theatre which they share with their parents. Visits to the playgroup by groups such as the Half Moon Theatre company offer children new and exciting experiences and encourage their participation. Staff are aware that some children have special needs and effectively use their well-established links with the local inclusion workers to work together to offer appropriate care and support so all are able to benefit fully from the opportunities available.

Staff strive to include all children and celebrate the benefits of appropriate support and effective liaison with parents which result in the progress of individual children.

Children's behaviour is generally good. They understand the routine and respond to requests from staff to, for example, line up sensibly to go outside. Staff offer regular praise and encouragement which helps children feel valued. They work calmly, patiently and consistently to encourage children to think about what they have done and to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Children themselves are learning to develop their own negotiating skills as they, for example, take turns in the sand tray and remind their friends to 'please share' and not to forget when it is their turn. Children are developing their independent skills as they put on their outdoor clothes, freely access the toilet and play happily with friends or on their own. They listen well to staff and confidently make their own play choices. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is open and friendly and staff are always available to talk with them about their children, primarily using daily arrival and departure times at the gate for this. Appropriate information is shared at the initial meeting and registration documents completed as staff spend lots of time explaining how the playgroup operates. Other information is displayed on the notice boards and through occasional newsletters. Children take regular work home and staff meet with parents to discuss their progress and share their end of year report. Parents are invited to events like the theatre trip and enjoy being able to share these special occasions with their children.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Staff talk to parents at the initial meeting about the daily programme and how children's learning and development will be encouraged. A basic weekly plan is displayed showing how activities are linked to the different areas of learning and the staff also use some photographs to show what children gain from various activities. However, there are no displays or written information in the parent pack to explain clearly to parents how their children learn and what the Foundation Stage means which may mean that opportunities to continue children's learning at home are missed. Parents meet with staff to discuss their children's progress and receive a report in preparation for their transition to school. Parents' comments are sought through questionnaires and they are also able to express their views as members of the parent committee.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a playgroup which has been a longstanding part of the local community. It offers children a range of different experiences to develop their play and learning opportunities which includes outdoor play on a regular basis. Children and staff have established a good relationship together and enjoy sharing activities. All appropriate selection and recruitment procedures are in place to ensure the suitability of those who work with the children and there is a good commitment to training from the staff which enhances their knowledge and practice. Children benefit from being part of a small group where staff know them well as individuals and have created an environment where children feel secure and are happy to engage. Although the manager has had sole responsibility for the playgroup for some time she now works with another trained and experienced member of staff and together they form an enthusiastic and committed team. They are currently planning for a temporary move into other premises while their building is improved and developed. They have prepared children well for this move and understand the feelings that it may provoke and therefore encourage children to verbalise these through play. This small team are able to get together to plan and discuss the children

and to share ideas on a daily basis. They know all the children well and want to see them enjoy and achieve according to their individual needs. Most of the required documentation is in place for the safe and efficient running of the group although in some areas such as the complaints procedure, the child protection procedure and the attendance recording this is not fully complete or up-to-date. All policies and procedures are currently under review and they will then be included in a booklet to be shared with the parents so they are fully informed of the way the playgroup runs. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management for nursery education is good. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and have created a play and learning environment which is bright and welcoming and provides children with lots of different and challenging opportunities but at the same time respects their individuality and allows them to direct their own play. Staff have a good commitment to training to enhance their practice and work well together to provide a positive and enthusiastic example for children, using opportunities well to engage with them. They regularly monitor children's progress to make sure they are appropriately supporting or extending them and discuss with parents their plans for development when they meet with them. They liaise well with the Early Years services who visit regularly and they use the support of outside professionals to ensure they provide an inclusive provision which best meets the needs of all children. They have established good links with some of the local schools and attend various events and invite teachers in to meet the children. The staff have looked at the imminent development of the setting and identified where improvements can be made to provide better outcomes for the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were set in relation to reviewing the complaints and the sick children's policy. The complaints procedure displayed for parents on the noticeboard does not include the number of the regulator but the policies currently being reviewed do, although these still need to be updated. The sick children's policy includes action to be taken in the event of children being infectious or ill.

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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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 that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- review all documentation in relation to the complaints and the child protection policies to ensure they contain all current and required information and that the system for registering children and staff shows hours of attendance.

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 opportunities for parents to learn about the Foundation Stage and share in their children's learning.

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