



The Village Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218261
Inspection date	26 April 2006
Inspector	Jacqueline Mason
Setting Address	Village Hall, Pinfold Lane, Cheslyn Hay, Walsall, West Midlands, WS6 7HP
Telephone number	01922 410668
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Registered person	The Village 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Village Playgroup opened in 1992. It operates from the main hall and a smaller room in the Village Hall, which is situated close to the centre of the village of Cheslyn Hay. The pre-school playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently 66 children from 2 to 4 years on roll. This includes 24 children who are funded for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children with special needs.

The playgroup opens from Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00 each morning and an afternoon session from 12:30 until 15:00 takes place on Wednesdays.

Ten full-time and part-time staff work with the children. Half of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff are working towards a level three qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The arrangements for sick children ensures that the best interests of all children are met. A written statement advising parents and carers that staff would seek necessary emergency medical advice or treatment is included in the welcome pack that is issued for each child attending. Parents and carers sign an acknowledgement slip in the welcome pack to confirm that they accept the terms and conditions of the setting. Children are encouraged to be aware of their own health and hygiene and staff encourage children to wipe their noses when needed and dispose of tissues appropriately. Good hygiene is promoted effectively. Well established routines increase children's awareness of the importance of washing their hands before eating and after toileting. Staff act as positive role models, for example children see staff wiping the tables using anti-bacterial sprays before snacks are served.

Good arrangements are in place to encourage children to eat healthily and make healthy choices. Children are offered toast as part of the mid-session snack time and are offered fruit at the end of the session. Special dietary needs are met through discussion with parents and carers. For example, children are offered milk at snack time unless parents request juice or water. Although children do not have free access to a drink of water, they are able to request a drink and it is given to them.

The provision for physical development is good. Indoor spaces are used well to enable children to be able to take part in energetic physical play. Satisfactory use is made of the outdoor space during the winter months.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are not fully protected because there are no procedures in place that staff would follow if a child became lost during a playgroup session. However, security of the premises is good to prevent children from leaving unsupervised. Effective arrangements for the arrival and collection of children help to ensure that children are not able to leave with any persons not nominated by parents or carers. Staff take positive steps to ensure that children can play safely both indoors and outside. For example socket covers are used to cover electrical sockets and a safety gate restricts children's access to the reception area. Fire safety procedures are effective. Children are protected in the event of needing to evacuate the premises in an emergency as

evacuation practises are carried out regularly. Children are learning what to do in an emergency to keep themselves safe. Staff are aware of how to raise the alarm and where to assemble with the children outside.

Children are well protected because staff have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the protection of children. They have a sound knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse and are confident to report concerns to ensure that the welfare of children is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff do not have a sound knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and because of this it is not currently implemented into the provision. This results in the individual developmental needs for children under the age of three not being fully met as they are drawn into the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, a good range of toys and activities are provided each day and children are developing confidence as they independently decide which activities they are going to take part in. Children are encouraged to discover and learn for themselves, for example adults do not intervene in art and craft activities, and this helps children to develop individual creativity. They are learning through experience that fosters their spiritual development well. Children are confident to work alone as well as with adult input. Staff respond well to the children and are interested in what they say and do. Staff encourage language development and help children to learn new vocabulary based on their own experiences and adult input. A consistent routine is followed that helps children to settle quickly and enjoy their time in playgroup although children do not always have freedom of choice between indoor and outdoor play.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and plan a varied and interesting range of activities that promotes all areas of learning. Adult-led and free-play activities are planned to promote a balanced curriculum that helps children to build on their natural curiosity as learners. The learning intention of each adult-led activity is clear and relates directly to the stepping stones. Activities are evaluated and children's learning recorded to ensure that they are making developmental progress.

Staff have good relationships with the children and are actively engaged in their play and learning. Staff sit with the children and encourage them to persist in activities of their own choosing. Children are encouraged to operate independently in the environment and are confident to seek out adults for support and conversation. They enjoy chatting to staff about their home lives and readily make links between their home and playgroup. Children are developing a good vocabulary based on their own experiences and adult input. They take pleasure in listening to stories in small groups and enjoy looking at and talking about illustrations in books. Children are encouraged to recognise print in books. However, insufficient attention is made to providing children with opportunities to see print in the environment to help them develop

reading skills. For example children only see their written name on their coat pegs and on their art work. Children are not provided with adequate opportunities for mark making. The quality of the materials provided for children to practise writing are poor and because of this children's writing skills are not developing well.

Children are developing an interest in numbers and counting. They are encouraged to count in everyday play and routine situations, for example counting out their own pieces of toast onto their plate at snack time. Children see numerals in the environment and are encouraged to take part in number games to help them recognise numerals. Children sort by shape, size and colour confidently. They investigate construction materials and join pieces together to build shapes and models. Children are developing an interest in the world around them. Staff help them to learn about their own beliefs and cultures as well as those of others. Children are developing an awareness of time. They understand that watches and clocks are used to find out the time of day and enjoy exploring time through role play. However, staff involvement in some role play provision does not fully ensure that children are able to play imaginatively based on their own and imagined experiences and adult input.

Children have satisfactory access to outdoor play although sometimes have to wait for their turn to play outside. They are able to manoeuvre wheeled toys confidently and are able to stop, start and change direction to avoid obstacles when walking and running. Self-expression is developing well, particularly through art and craft activities where children are encouraged to work independently and discover through experience. Children enjoy exploring colour, texture and media.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff have a sound understanding of equal opportunities issues to help them encourage children to learn about the world around them and the diversity of it. Children are learning about their own and other cultures and beliefs through art and craft activities that promote festivals and celebrations. Resources to promote positive images of culture, disability and gender are good. Although there are currently no children on roll with special educational needs there are suitable arrangements in place to ensure that they can be supported appropriately. Children's behaviour is managed well to help them learn right from wrong and play harmoniously together. Strategies to manage children's unwanted behaviour are appropriate to the age and level of understanding of the children. Good behaviour is valued and praised and children are encouraged to share and take turns with popular resources such as glue-brushes and paint. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents and have good relationships with them that are friendly and trusting. Parents and carers are encouraged to share what they know about their child and this helps staff to care for children to meet their individual needs. The complaints procedure does not include up-to-date contact details for the regulator and a complaints log is not in place. This

results in parents and carers not being kept fully informed of any complaints and any actions taken. However, policies and procedures are shared with parents and carers to help them make informed decisions about their children's care. They are kept informed about the provision through notices on the notice board and daily discussion. There is an active committee made up of parents, carers and staff.

Partnerships with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education are satisfactory. The arrangements to share children's developmental progress with them are appropriate to ensure that they are kept fully informed. Parents and carers are encouraged to bring in resources for topics and participate in the rota for parent helpers.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Most policies and procedures are in place to enable the safe and efficient management of the playgroup. Parents and carers are encouraged to look at the documentation to help them develop an awareness of the provision. Documentation relating to children is stored securely and all necessary information is recorded. However, not all records relating to the setting are kept on site and therefore not readily available for inspection, this potentially compromises children's well being. For example staff records and records of committee members are stored at the home of a committee member. Committee members have not completed necessary suitability checks. However, there are good arrangements in place to ensure that children are never left alone with anyone who has not been vetted.

Children are cared for by consistent staff who know them well and help them to feel secure and settled. Staff organise space adequately to promote children's self-confidence and encourage them to operate independently in the environment. Children are encouraged to self-select from the wide range of toys and activities selected each day by staff.

The leadership and management of the playgroup is satisfactory. Staff work well together as part of a team and children across the playgroup are looked after by staff who are enthusiastic about developing their childcare skills and knowledge to enable them to offer a good standard of care and education. There are adequate systems in place to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the playgroup and the quality of its nursery education. For example regular team meetings are held to discuss issues raised during playgroup sessions. The staff team respond well to advice and guidance offered by the Early Years teacher from the Local Authority. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provision was required to improve the hand drying facilities, ensure that the times of the arrival and departure of children was recorded and a clear policy to be put in place that would be followed if an allegation was made against a member of staff or volunteer.

As a result of these recommendations the hand drying facilities for children has been improved. Children no longer share a hand towel. The risks of cross infection from hand drying has been eliminated as children now use individual disposable paper towels that are discarded after use. The arrangements to record the exact times of children's arrival and departure are sufficient. Children's attendance is recorded in a daily register and children are 'marked in' as they arrive. Playgroup sessions run for the same hours each day so staff always know which children are present as they all arrive and depart together.

A policy statement has been put in place that would be followed if an allegation of abuse was made against a staff member or a volunteer. The policy includes the procedures that would be followed and these are appropriate to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- provide a statement of the procedure that would be followed if a child became lost
- improve the outcomes for children under three by implementing the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- amend the complaints procedure to ensure that the correct contact details of the regulator are included and a complaints log is kept and made available to parents and carers on request

- ensure that all records relating to the day care setting, such as staff records and records of committee members, are available for inspection at all times and that committee members complete relevant suitability checks.

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 opportunities for children to practice writing skills and the quality of the writing materials provided
- promote opportunities for children to see their written name
- develop adult's involvement in the role play provision to ensure that children are able to play imaginatively.

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