



# **Spinney Hill Primary School and Community Centre Playgroup**

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 226885  
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**Inspector** Alison Edwards

**Setting Address** Spinney Hill Primary School and Community Centre, Ventor Street, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE5 5EZ  
**Telephone number** 0116 2734836  
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**Registered person** Leicester City Council  
**Type of inspection** Integrated  
**Type of care** Sessional care, Out of School care, Crèche

## 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*

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## 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?

Spinney Hill Primary School and Community Centre Playgroup opened in 1986, and is one of a number of playgroups now managed by Leicester City Council Children's and Young People's Services division. It operates from Spinney Hill Primary School on the eastern side of Leicester city and serves the surrounding area. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11:30 during school term time. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The registration also covers

the operation of an out of school club for children attending the school and a crèche for children of parents attending community classes. The crèche operates flexibly during term times to support adult classes. The out of school club regularly operates each weekday during school terms from 15:15 to 17:00. The playgroup operates from a ground floor room in the community wing with access to nearby cloakroom, kitchen and storage facilities. The crèche operates from a room in the community mobile in the playground and utilises the community wing storage and cloakroom facilities. The out of school provision operates in the ground and first floor halls and classrooms in the main school building, with access to nearby cloakroom, storage and kitchen facilities. All children share access to the school playground.

There are currently 23 children aged from three to under five years on roll at the playgroup all of whom receive funded nursery education. Some 40 children aged under five are currently on roll within the crèche, and 19 at the out of school club. The majority of children attending speak English as an additional language.

The provision employs nine childcare staff on a regular basis, four of whom hold relevant qualifications at level three.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in clean and well-maintained premises so helping to maintain their health. They are able to rest and relax according to their needs, for example as younger children attending the crèche are able to sleep in their own push chairs or on soft floor mats. Appropriate procedures are often in place to minimise the spread of cross-infection, for example as playgroup children are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet. However, current practices are not fully effective in encouraging children's awareness of good health and hygiene practices as playgroup children do not routinely wash their hands before handling foods at snack time.

Children across the age range participate in a range of activities helping them to develop their dexterity. For example, children attending the out of school club have use of a range of construction kits, playgroup children enjoy mark-making with pencils or felt-tips and begin to use scissors with growing control as they cut playdough and paper shapes, whilst younger children in the crèche manipulate a range of baby activity toys. Activities for children attending the out of school provision often include opportunities for team games in a large hall, so enabling them to be physically active. Planned activities for children attending the playgroup include use of a range of equipment such as wheeled toys, hoops and balls in the school playground in fine weather. However, playgroup children's large movement skills are not fully promoted as they have only limited access to challenging and well-planned opportunities for movement and physical exercise indoors.

Appropriate written information is sought from parents regarding children's individual health, care and dietary needs, enabling these to be met. Children are routinely

offered drinks during sessions, so helping to ensure they take sufficient fluids, and playgroup children are able to access fresh drinking water throughout the session. Children attending the out of school club are offered biscuits, whilst playgroup children have a range of snacks, often including fruit, to help contribute to a balanced diet.

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

The provision is good.

Across the provision available space and resources are generally used effectively to enable children to play actively or relax according to their needs. For example, within the out of school provision, children have regular access to a large school hall to be physically active as well as a side room enabling them to use floor or table top activities such as construction comfortably and safely. Within the crèche, younger children are supported in sitting and playing comfortably by use of a floor ring. Within the playgroup, furnishings are arranged to create designated areas for activities such as pretend play, creative activities or floor play, enabling children to move freely between a variety of interesting activities. Clearly defined areas within the level and enclosed school playgrounds are used in fine weather to enable children to safely have access to fresh air and outdoor play.

Across the provision, resources and play materials are in good clean condition and are generally suited to children's stage of development. For example, toys used in the crèche are often chunky and easy to grasp, so enabling younger children to manipulate them safely. Within the out of school provision, there is a wide and varied range of interesting resources, including a good selection of physical play equipment such as bats, balls, nets and hoops, as well as a wide selection of board games. These are well organised in accessible storage cupboards, so enabling children and staff to easily and safely choose and get out what they want to use.

Staff generally maintain careful supervision of children, for example as they accompany playgroup children using the community wing cloakroom. They utilise an appropriate range of precautions to maintain children's safety. For example, doors from the playgroup and crèche are kept secured, and external doors to the main building where the out of school provision operates are operated by a buzzer system to help minimise the risks of unauthorised entry. Systematic safety checks are undertaken on a daily basis to ensure resources and premises are safe for children's use. For example checks are made to ensure that any equipment belonging to other users of the building does not pose a hazard to children. Staff generally show sound awareness of identified procedures to maintain children's safety, for example evacuation arrangements in the event of a fire. However they occasionally lack awareness of the clear written policies to be followed in specific circumstances, such as if a child goes missing. This potentially limits their ability to maintain children's welfare to best effect.

Staff understand what child abuse and neglect mean and are familiar with appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of any concerns about a child, so helping to safeguard children's welfare. However, some staff lack clarity with the

specific procedures to be followed in the event of any child protection allegations against staff, so potentially limiting the provision's ability to manage such a situation to best effect.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Across the provision, children are offered a selection of activities generally suited to their stage of development and interests. For example, within the crèche, younger children show interest in manipulating clean and sturdy activity centres and stacking toys, whilst school-aged children are able to use a variety of resources including computers, construction kits, creative materials, books and sports equipment. Within the playgroup, children settle quickly on arrival, and are usually sufficiently confident and self-assured to work and play independently or in small groups, for example as one child shows pleasure in constructing a tower of interlocking plastic bricks on her own, and as two children make each other pretend drinks in the role play area.

#### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning for nursery education within the playgroup is satisfactory. Long term topic-based planning provides a generally broad and balanced framework for children to experience most aspects of learning. Staff help children understand the consequences of their behaviour, for example when they explain to a child the dangers of slipping on water spilt from a water tray during pouring activities. Children respond readily to staff's requests and expectations, for example with regard to sitting in a circle at snack time. A variety of methods are generally used appropriately to support children's learning. These include adult-led group story telling and singing sessions, informal engagement between staff and children, as when staff help children understand the use of a hairdressing role play area, and opportunities for independent play, as when children explore pouring water between different containers. Furnishings and play equipment are sturdy and suited to children's stage of development. However, they are not always presented well to provide a stimulating environment encouraging children's independence and purpose. For example books are often torn, scribbled on or have missing pages. Staff observe and assess children's progress on a regular basis, and are just introducing a new system of recording their assessments to give them a better overview of children's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. However, this system is not yet used effectively to match planned activities to children's individual learning needs to give consistently good levels of challenge, progression and independence.

Children's personal, social and emotional skills are developing well. They often know each others' names, begin to play cooperatively together in simple role play, and respond well as staff help them negotiate minor disputes over sharing toys. Their individuality is recognised and respected as staff positively acknowledge children's use of home languages. They gain awareness of different cultures and lifestyles as they celebrate a range of festivals and use a selection of resources showing different clothing, skin tones and hair styles. However, staff do not always fully encourage

children's independence, for example by encouraging them to squeeze out ready mixed paints themselves, or to safely use pencil sharpeners themselves.

Children are developing confidence in communicating their own needs and feelings in words, and begin to use simple sentences to describe their activities. Staff acknowledge use of home languages and model and extend appropriate use of English. Children begin to show an enjoyment in simple nursery rhymes and songs in adult-led group sessions. They show interest in simple mark making with pencils, paints, crayons, although they are not consistently encouraged to develop confidence in using purposeful writing, for example by using appointment books within the role play area or trying to name their own paintings. Children are able to handle books carefully and enjoy looking at them when adults spend time encouraging them to do so.

Children begin to learn about two-and three-dimensional shapes as staff encourage them to cut out and name different paper shapes, or as they build with commercial construction sets. They show interest in simple practical activities such as pouring water or scooping sand, helping them begin to be aware of capacity and volume. Staff use stories and rhymes to introduce children to simple positional words like 'behind' or 'under'. Children often use some number names spontaneously and enjoy joining in some simple number rhymes. They sometimes begin to use number names under five accurately in their play or to recognise numerals but are not consistently challenged to extend their understanding through well-planned and purposeful activities. Planned activities and daily routines are not consistently used well to help them develop ideas such as 'more' or 'less' or simple problem solving.

Children begin to gain knowledge and understanding of the world as they enjoy handling a variety of substances such as sand, playdough and water. They begin to show curiosity as they handle magnifying glasses and plastic insects on a display table. They often join commercial construction pieces together, and sometimes begin to purposefully identify what they want to make. Children show interest in using the mouse to change screens on a readily accessible computer, and make use of items of everyday technology such as swipe card in their pretend play. They less frequently participate in purposeful and well-planned activities helping them learn about their own and the wider neighbourhood, or about aspects of change over time.

Children enjoy handling a range of unturned percussion instruments in group music sessions. They sing familiar rhymes and songs with enjoyment. They independently enjoy simple pretend activities such as pouring out cups of pretend tea for each other. With adult support they sometimes begin to develop more imaginative role play, for example washing a doll's hair at the hairdresser's. Planned creative activities introduce them to a variety of different materials and creative techniques, such as collage and sponge painting. However, these activities are not always planned and presented to encourage children to develop their own independent imaginative ideas.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are calm and friendly in their dealings with children, so helping them feel

included and at ease. Children are usually relaxed in their daily dealings with staff and peers, for example as out of school children casually greet a staff member during the school day and ask about arrangements for sports activities, or as children attending the crèche show interest in each other's activities. Across the provision, children are able to exercise simple choices in their activities at most times. They learn to behave appropriately in different circumstances, for example as playgroup children often listen attentively to stories, or sit quietly whilst having their snack. Adults begin to encourage them to take account of each other's needs and feelings, as when a playgroup staff member talks with children about taking turns with paints. Playgroup children show excitement and wonder when they hear the rain and thunder of a sudden electrical storm.

Children's individuality is recognised because staff take account of information from parents about specific health, care and dietary needs. Some books, and play materials such as puzzles including images of different cultural celebrations, help children recognise and respect diversity. Staff are aware of the need for careful liaison with parents and other relevant agencies to support provision for any children with identified special needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents of playgroup children receiving funded nursery education is satisfactory. Parents' responses generally indicate satisfaction and confidence in the care offered to children. They receive concise written information about routines and policies, so helping parents and staff work together to meet children's care needs. Communication with parents who have English as an additional language is aided because playgroup staff speak a range of community languages. Parents receive some encouragement to help support their children's learning at home, for example by sharing books loaned out by the playgroup, or by helping children achieve a specific learning target set by the playgroup. However, at present staff and parents do not fully share information about how children's activities and experiences within the playgroup contribute to their progress towards the early learning goals.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the funded nursery education programme within the playgroup is satisfactory. Staff show a willingness to consider new approaches and practice guidelines identified by local authority advisors, for example by introducing new systems to track children's progress through the stepping stones. Internally, frequent informal communication between staff and management is supported by more formal appraisal of staff's ongoing professional development needs. However, as yet there is little systematic monitoring and evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the nursery education programme to establish clearly identified priorities for continued development.

Within the provision overall, available space and resources are generally organised appropriately to meet children's needs, so helping children to be settled and at ease.

Required contact, personal and health records are appropriately maintained to enable children's individual care needs to be met. Contingency arrangements are in place to ensure there are enough staff present to supervise and play with children in the crèche, playgroup and out of school provision, for example if regular staff are unwell or injured. However, not all relevant records of staff contact, recruitment and qualification details are readily accessible on the premises, so making it difficult to confirm that those working with children are suitable to do so. Additionally, current arrangements do not always clearly identify those in actual day to day charge or always ensure that such persons are appropriately qualified. Written policies and procedures are in place to underpin the organisation of the crèche, playgroup and out of school provision. However, staff sometimes lack familiarity with certain details of these, for example with regard to specific aspects of safety or child protection, This potentially compromises their ability to manage particular situations to best effect to promote children's welfare. Overall, children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection of day care the provider was asked to ensure that staff undertook child protection training and that new staff were made aware of their responsibilities in this area during their induction. Staff training has been undertaken, and child protection issues are introduced within the induction process. This helps ensure that staff understand what child abuse and neglect mean and are familiar with appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of any concerns about a child, so helping to safeguard children's welfare. However, some current staff lack clarity with the specific procedures to be followed in the event of any child protection allegations against staff, so potentially limiting the provision's ability to manage such a situation to best effect. A further recommendation has therefore been made regarding this issue.

At the last inspection of funded nursery education, the provider was asked to support the new staff team in its development of educational provision for children, to improve planning and access to appropriate resources to support children's progress in several areas of learning, and to continue to develop effective assessment systems in order to tailor the curriculum to children's individual needs.

Current staff have attended training on aspects of the foundation stage, and continue to work with local authority advisors to develop their practice further. Regular assessments of children's progress are now undertaken. However, as yet information gathered from these assessments is not used to full effect to plan activities and use of resources to best support children's individual learning needs, so a further recommendation has been raised on this issue.

### **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 all 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 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 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 staff are familiar with policies and procedures to underpin safe management of setting, with particular reference to procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost and child protection allegations against staff
- improve systems to ensure that Ofsted is notified promptly of who is in charge of providing actual day to day care and to ensure that such persons hold an appropriate qualification at level three
- develop more effective systems to ensure that accessible individual records are kept on the premises containing the names and contact details of all staff, together with details of their recruitment clearances and qualifications
- improve arrangements to encourage playgroup children to learn about good hygiene practices within daily routines, with particular regard to hand washing before eating

#### **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):

- extend methods to share information with parents about their children's activities and experiences within the playgroup and how these contribute to their progress towards the early learning goals
- develop more effective methods to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education programme and to identify priorities for continued development
- develop more effective use of assessments to provide an overview of children's individual progress through the stepping stones and make more use of these assessments within short term planning to ensure that activities, experiences and resources are used to best effect to promote challenge, independence and purpose in children's learning.

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