



# Hexham Community Centre Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	301798
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 July 2005
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<b>Registered person</b>	Committee of Hexham Community Centre Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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 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?

Hexham Community Centre Playgroup is a committee run facility that has been registered since 2001, although it has been running for over 35 years. The group operates from rooms within the community centre, which is situated close to the town centre. A maximum of 24 children may attend the facility at any one time. The playgroup is open from 09.15 to 14.00 each Tuesday and Thursday and from 09.15 to 12.00 each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Sessions run during school term

times only.

There are currently 32 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. The group mainly serves the needs of the local community, although some families come from a wider catchment area.

The playgroup employs six staff to work with the children. Of these, the manager and three members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Others are planning to study towards a relevant qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning the importance of good personal hygiene through suitable daily routines. For example, they enjoy premises that are appropriately maintained, they see staff using antibacterial spray as they wipe down tables and ensuring that toys and equipment are suitably maintained in a clean condition. Children are learning the importance of washing their hands after toileting or messy play activities and before they eat snack or lunch.

Children's health requirements are appropriately discussed between staff and parents, who use comprehensive policy statements and suitable documentation systems to ensure any special requirements are appropriately recorded and observed. Some staff have completed first aid courses, although some certificates are not available and one has recently expired, so present arrangements do not effectively ensure there is an appropriately qualified first aider on duty at all times. Children's accidents are appropriately recorded and communicated with parents and carers.

Children's individual dietary needs are appropriately discussed with parents and observed by staff, some of whom hold a relevant food hygiene certificate. Children sit together, in small groups, as they receive a suitable range of healthy snacks, such as fruit or salad finger foods and a drink of milk or water. Those staying for the lunch club bring packed lunches, although these are not always appropriately labelled or suitably stored to ensure children's health.

Children have regular opportunities to enjoy suitable physical activities that help them to develop new skills, whilst encouraging them to keep healthy. For example, they enjoy circle activities, parachute games, using soft play equipment, ride-on toys and moving around freely in the large hall. They also have opportunities for quiet activities and rests in the main playroom.

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

The provision is good.

Children and parents enjoy a warm, welcoming and spacious setting, which is well organised to provide an accessible, inviting, play and learning environment for children. Children's safety is given high priority because staff conduct comprehensive annual risk assessments and closely monitor the premises, toys and equipment to ensure any potential risks are effectively minimised. Children are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe as they move around the setting or whilst on occasional outings in the local community. For example, they hold hands with each other and walk sensibly in pairs, they line up enthusiastically at the door and wait until everyone is ready and they walk carefully, especially when going up and down the stairs. Children's safety is also enhanced by staff ensuring good supervision and support and positively promoting children to consider their roles in keeping themselves safe.

Children's welfare is effectively considered because of good daily routines within the setting. For example, children are encouraged to help with tidying up to avoid trips and falls, they are closely monitored by staff and good security and safety arrangements are vigilantly practised. Particular emphasis is given to fire safety, through the availability of appropriate fire safety equipment, a clearly defined procedure for evacuating the building and well-organised fire drills with staff and children. Children are developing a clear understanding of good systems for keeping themselves safe.

Children's wellbeing is paramount regarding matters of child protection, although no record is presently kept regarding existing injuries to children. However, several staff have completed relevant training and they demonstrate a sound understanding of child protection issues. They discuss relevant matters with parents and have comprehensive policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's care arrangements are suitably met as a result of staff being aware of each child's individual requirements and ensuring that all children have sufficient support. Most children arrive confidently and quickly settle into the group; others are easily distracted into play activities. All children enjoy playrooms that are well set out to provide an attractive, inviting, accessible play and learning environment. They are gaining a good sense of routine and know what is expected of them. For example, most respond appropriately when it is tidy up time and they line up carefully at the door before going into the large hall. They are learning to play purposefully, share, take turns and to have respect and consideration for each other, because staff use positive support strategies such as taking time to talk or listen to children and encouraging them to work co-operatively with each other.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Several staff are suitably qualified and all are well experienced. Their knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals is developing and they are using training opportunities well, as a means of gaining a sound understanding of how young children learn effectively.

Children enjoy interesting topics and themes that adequately link to the six areas of learning. They have a suitable mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities to choose from and staff work supportively, encouraging children to be actively involved. Most children are sufficiently challenged, although some adult-led activities are not adequately focused to take account of children's prior learning or attendance patterns and present assessment systems do not consistently ensure all children are sufficiently challenged and extended. Despite this, children are making at least satisfactory progress across all areas of learning and more able children are progressing well. All children are given sufficient time to complete their tasks because staff have devised regular, but flexible, daily routines. Most children behave very well as a result of staff providing enthusiasm, encouragement and purposeful praise. As a result, sessions generally run smoothly, children enjoy their time in the setting and are proud of their achievements.

Most children are interested, excited and motivated to learn. They enjoy exploring the sound range of interesting learning opportunities available to them, such as painting, water play, music, imaginative play, construction or reading books. All children are developing confidence, independence and pride in their achievements. Most are kind and helpful towards each other and behave very well. They relate well to staff, adults and peers and some enjoy talking freely about their home and community.

Children are developing good language and communication skills. Many chat enthusiastically, with staff and peers, about things that interest them. Most enjoy stories and listen attentively, more able children recalling narratives or predicting what might happen next, whilst most younger children listen and enjoy looking at the illustrations. Children are learning to link sounds to letters through suitable use of repetitive songs and rhymes that reinforce phonic sounds. Children are developing good hand-eye co-ordination and some are beginning to form a variety of recognisable letters.

Children are beginning to show an interest in numbers and counting and some use number names and language spontaneously during their play. More able children can identify a range of numerals and some can successfully touch-count a series of objects. They are learning to grade and sort and some children can recognise, name and match a variety of shapes. Many understand, and correctly use, positional language and language relating to size.

Children are developing an interest in the world in which they live. They have sound opportunities to use their senses to learn about living things, objects and events. For example, when playing with water, tasting fruit and salad foods or when enjoying music, imagination and creative activities. Children are learning to operate simple equipment competently. More able children can complete computer programs successfully and use simple tools and techniques to design and construct imaginatively. All children benefit from positive images and planned activities that teach them about different cultures or beliefs. For example, as part of the Chinese New Year celebration, they made Chinese lanterns and learned to count from one to three in Chinese. They are also developing a sensitive awareness of other community groups, as they donate the proceeds of their Christmas church service to a local charitable organisation.

Children are learning to move around confidently throughout the setting. More able children demonstrate good spatial awareness and control their body movements very well whilst walking, running, climbing and negotiating obstacles. For example, they manoeuvre competently around each other whilst using the stepping stones or tunnels in the soft play area. Younger or less confident children demonstrate increasing control as they hold out their arms to help themselves balance. Children are developing a sound awareness of personal needs and most competently carry out a range of healthy practices, such as hand washing and personal hygiene. Children are learning to use one-handed tools and equipment competently. Some are able to use small tools and malleable materials safely and with increasing control.

Children enjoy a broad range of creative opportunities and most show an interest in what they see, hear, smell, taste and touch. For example, they taste different fruits, enjoy water play, listening activities and various creative opportunities that are available to them. Most are developing good imagination through interesting role play situations. For example, they enjoyed creating a boat on the ocean using soft play equipment on top of a parachute. Most children joined in enthusiastically, shaking the parachute up and down to create small or large waves. Children have good opportunities to develop an interest in music. They sing songs and action rhymes on a daily basis and they also have regular lessons with a music teacher, when they listen to various tunes and have good opportunities to join in with repeated refrains and to play their musical instruments.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Partnerships with parents and carers are satisfactory. Children's individual needs are adequately met because staff work in partnership with parents and carers, ensuring relevant information is appropriately shared. For example, children's personal information and requirements are suitably discussed and recorded, an information leaflet provides basic information about the setting, formal written policy statements are in place and suitable contracts and parental agreements are maintained. Children's progress is appropriately shared with parents, who are encouraged to continue their child's learning at home. Comments received from parents indicate that they are happy with the quality of child care and education provided and that their children enjoy attending playgroup.

Of the children presently attending the group, there are none who have special needs or who speak English as an additional language, but there are suitable arrangements in place to ensure all children are appropriately supported and included. Children benefit from activities that are gender-free as they readily access the full range of toys, resources and learning opportunities. They enjoy informative activities that help them to learn about other cultures, religions and the wider world. They help with charity events and are learning to make connections between their own lives and those of others. They use a sound range of multicultural equipment and they see positive images in books and on posters. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriately fostered.

Most children behave very well as a result of staff setting and positively reinforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations for children's behaviour. Children receive purposeful praise and encouragement from staff, thereby boosting their confidence and self-esteem. If children demonstrate negative or challenging behaviour, staff quietly discuss this with them and sensitively reinforce acceptable behaviour. As a result, children are learning to accept responsibility for their own actions.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care needs are appropriately met as a result of suitable organisation, leadership and management of nursery education. For example, they are well supported and most appear to be happy and settled within the group. As a result, they are gaining the confidence to initiate and extend their own play and learning.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The playgroup is adequately run by the community centre committee, who use satisfactory employment and recruitment methods to ensure staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. However, the registered provider has not notified Ofsted of significant staff and management changes within the group and staff files do not contain evidence of all necessary checks having been completed for all staff, nor record details of all relevant training certificates. The playgroup manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the group and she ensures staff are adequately supported and that there are sufficient opportunities for training and staff development. All staff demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to their work. They are able to identify the team's strengths and areas for development and all show a strong commitment to monitoring and improving practices within the group.

Children's welfare, care and learning is clearly identified using a broad range of policy and procedure statements that are appropriately implemented in the setting, as well as being made available to parents, to keep them sufficiently informed about practices within the group. Recording systems are appropriately kept and securely stored to ensure confidentiality is adequately maintained. This contributes to continuity of the children's care.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection staff have drafted a written statement that provides details of the procedure to be followed if parents have a complaint. This information is held in the policies and procedures file, which is readily available to parents.

## **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.

## **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):

- make sure enough staff are qualified in first aid to ensure that at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate is on the premises or on outings at any one time
- improve arrangements for storing perishable foodstuffs and for ensuring children's packed lunch containers are suitably labelled
- ensure details of existing injuries are appropriately recorded in line with National Standards
- improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations and set in place a procedure to notify Ofsted of relevant matters, particularly with regard to changes in staff and management
- improve staff files by ensuring they contain evidence of all necessary checks having been completed and details of relevant training certificates.

### **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):

- continue to develop practitioners' knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage in order to ensure all children receive a broad balanced curriculum across all six areas of learning
- devise and implement a systematic, planning and assessment system, closely linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals, using focused activity sheets effectively to ensure all children are sufficiently challenged and extended and to inform future planning.



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