



Hallow Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Diane Hancock

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Registered person Hallow Pre-School
Type of inspection Integrated
Type of care 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

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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 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?

Hallow Pre-School opened in 1979. It operates from the committee room and kitchen of the village hall in Hallow in Worcestershire and has an enclosed area for outdoor play. The pre-school serves the village of Hallow and the surrounding area. A maximum of 16 children may attend the pre-school at any one time.

The setting is open each weekday in term time only Monday to Friday from 09.15 to 14.45. There are currently 43 children from two years to four years on roll. Of these

30 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions term time only. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and children whom English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight part-time staff. Of these two staff hold an appropriate qualification to Level 3 and five staff to Level 2. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher at the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean environment and good hygiene practice is in place for example staff regularly clean the tables and children use soap and paper towels. Children become increasingly independent as they are encouraged to use the toilet unaided, learn to wash their hands afterwards and before snacks at lunchtime. Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene. Children are protected from cross-infection because the group has a clear policy not to accept children who are ill which is signed by parents on admission. All appropriate health documentation is in place but records are not always signed by parents. Children are well protected as all staff have first aid qualifications and when off premises staff carry a mobile phone and have relevant health and contact details with them. Children's health needs are met as staff are fully informed of allergies, dietary requirements and health details with lists easily accessible. Staff are aware that many children have hay fever and plan the use of the playing field accordingly.

Children gain a good understanding of the principles of healthy eating and drinking through discussion at meal times and during topics. Children enjoy healthy snacks as they help themselves to a selection of different fruits and raw vegetables. Children have an eager appetite for the mid morning snack including toast. Children have a choice of water, milk and squash and staff meet parents requests. Children help prepare cups for snacks and each child pours their own drink developing good self-care skills. Children are very good at helping themselves to the water cooler when they need a drink throughout the day. They have a good understanding of the need to drink in hot weather. Children are encouraged to bring healthy lunch boxes, their parents are given a selection of leaflets with ideas for different foods that they could include. Staff discuss healthy eating at lunch and set a good example in what they eat. Children sit and eat very well and show good independence skills in a social environment with staff. Children are able to eat at their own pace in a relaxed meal time.

Children discover the benefits of a healthy lifestyle as they play outside twice a day in most weathers and make extensive use of the outside area during the summer months by doing a range of activities where the children are able to go between the areas and eat outside. Children enjoy playing imaginatively while outside in the fresh air, in the playhouse and with the water play equipment such as the hose pipe. Children of all ages develop excellent climbing and balancing skills as they use the big climbing frame with increasing confidence. Staff are always available to support

and encourage children who are less confident to help them to learn new skills. Children improve control of their bodies and their awareness of space as they ride bikes and pedal cars around small traffic cones. Children have plenty of opportunities for exercise and learn to work together well as they play team games outside. Children enjoy music and movement, which occasionally takes place in the hall.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. There are clear procedures in place for their safe arrival and departure. Other users of the village hall are excluded from the playgroup rooms during the sessions with reminder notices posted on the access doors. Staff have very good security measures in place for when children are collected as each child is handed over to their parent in turn.

Staff and committee have a conscientious attitude to safety. They carry out regular risk assessments and make ongoing improvements to create a safer environment for children such as improving the closure of the toilet doors. Staff undertake detailed risk assessments prior to any day trips such as to Shortwood Farm. Children develop an awareness of road safety through discussion and show good practice when out walking. Additional staff assist with helping children walk to the church and the school each week. Significant improvements have been made to fire safety following a risk assessment from a fire officer including with fire exits kept clear. Children know how to protect themselves in an emergency because they all practise the evacuation procedures regularly, learn from stories and have benefit from a visit by the local fire brigade. Children show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the sun as they wear hats, use sun cream and play under the gazebo when they are outside. Staff demonstrate good practise during the summer to limit the children being outside in the hot mid-day sun. Staff improve their knowledge of food safety through ongoing training.

Good use is made of the limited space with different rooms being used for various activities. Children help staff to tidy the toys away to ensure a safe environment is maintained. Staff check the outdoor area before children play out and remove poisonous weeds and debris if needed. The area is securely fenced with an excellent all-weather surface. Outdoor equipment is well maintained and items such as the climbing frame and sandpit have recently been replaced to improve safety. All children enjoy playing with a good range of toys which are well-maintained and replaced when appropriate. Toys are stored in a safe manner. Children's opportunities to self-select are limited by the constraints of current storage however children can ask for any toys.

Children are well supervised at all times due to the high staff to child ratios. Staff have a caring attitude towards the children and their welfare is paramount. Children are well protected as all staff and committee have a sound knowledge of the symptoms of abuse and the correct procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child's welfare or in the event of allegations being made about a member of staff. They have recently updated child protection policies and ensure these are effectively

shared by staff and committee. Child protection information is now more readily accessible.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children in the playgroup benefit from the warm and friendly environment. They enjoy good relationships with consistent staff who know them well. Children have a thoroughly enjoyable time as they engage in a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities to promote all areas of their learning and development. All children enjoy exploring different creative play including different textures of cornflour and developing their imaginations with play dough for example as they make birthday cakes. The needs of the young children are particularly well catered for as they attend their own sessions twice a week. Staff plan activities with reference to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They include targets for specific children and evaluate activities to inform their plans for the following week. Plans are often adapted to be more challenging as the young children are making excellent progress in their learning and show competent skills such as in their scissor control. Children are motivated and eager to learn and staff have high expectations of their capability. The young children as a group participate very well in the imaginary games such as pretending to be in a bus or on a journey, they are quick to think of ideas and suggestions and get really involved.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are happy, very enthusiastic and motivated to play and learn. They have improved on their level of concentration and show a positive attitude and interest in all activities. Children are happy to play alone, alongside their friends and eagerly participate in group activities. Children develop good self-esteem and self-confidence as they are proud of their achievements and are praised for the things they have made. They confidently speak in a group and are good at listening to one another. Children have very good social skills, are friendly and form firm friendships with one another. Children develop a good understanding of place and community as the setting actively encourages activities within the village and has excellent links with the local school and church. Children develop a growing awareness of their needs and the needs of others through different topics. They develop good self-care skills as they take responsibility for getting their own drinks throughout the day, independently access the toilet, put on their coats, prepare for snack-time and tidy away. Children play very well together, they are good at sharing and taking turns and make good progress in their behaviour as they respond well to the support and guidance of staff. Staff have very good relationships with the children, they share a sense of fun and humour and get involved in the children's play.

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals as they benefit from the experience and sound knowledge that the staff have of the Foundation Stage. Children are well supported in their learning with high levels of staff and their good interaction with the children. Activities are well planned, stimulating and cater for all

abilities. Children make good progress in all areas of their learning and in particular their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children enjoy popular construction activities as they build bridges and models such as aeroplanes with Stickle bricks and Duplo. They have plenty of opportunity to design things individually or working together in small groups showing good concentration and imagination. Children develop a very good understanding of technology and learn about how things work such as toasters. They are competent at using the computer and have a very good opportunity to access the facilities at the school on a weekly basis. Children can concentrate to follow instructions, develop good mouse control, access CBeebies website to do their activities and games. Children develop a knowledge and understanding of the world through well-planned activities celebrating a variety of countries, cultures and foods for example the children learnt to count in Japanese and attempted Japanese writing. The children did a theme on holidays and this increased their knowledge of the world as they looked at maps and a globe. The children have a good understanding and knowledge of the Christian faith as they all attend a 'mini-fish' session at the local church where they learn biblical songs and stories and enjoy joining in the creative and musical activities within the church. Children have a good sense of belonging within the community as they visit the school on a weekly basis to access the computers and attend events such as a re-enacted wedding party, this ensures that the children are familiar and well-prepared for school. Children eagerly participate in village art competitions and family fun days organised by the playgroup. They develop a good sense of time and place as they talk about and draw different experiences from home and playgroup. The children enjoy exploring and show an interest in the natural world, they enjoyed investigating different insects during the minibeasts theme and going on a bug hunt. The children have opportunity twice a year to attend forest school where they learn about nature, the changing seasons and enjoy activities such as bark rubbing. They recreate some aspects of forest school within the playground by growing plants and making wind chimes. The children learn to respect the natural environment as they learn and participate in recycling.

Children are very confident speakers they ask questions, contribute in group discussions and freely talk to adults and each other in their play and routines. Children listen well and are attentive at story time, they show an interest in books and handle them confidently themselves as they access these throughout the day. Children have an understanding that print carries meaning and staff have improved opportunities for writing in the role play areas such as when they learn about travel agents and holidays. Children explore mark making in a variety of ways such as in shaving foam, cornflour, colouring in and stencils. Children are beginning to form recognisable letters as they learn to trace over letters. Children have made very good progress in their drawing and hold pencils, chalks and paint brushes very well. The children thoroughly enjoy singing songs such as the frog song and exploring new sounds. Children learn to recognise letter sounds and words as they identify their name at snack time. Children recall events very well and communicate experiences such as the nativity and birthday parties. Staff encourage children to talk about what is happening as they explore and play.

Children have very good imagination, they eagerly participate in imaginary games such as going on a bear hunt and take great pride as they dress up in princess

dressess and shoes. Children enjoy creating games such as when using a piece of hose-pipe when playing with water and playing with construction toys making aeroplanes with Duplo and paper aeroplanes. Children are developing good manipulative skills as they make constructions with Lego, use scissors and enjoy threading activities. Children enjoy a wealth of interesting creative activities using different materials exploring different colours and textures through collage, painting, chalks, cornflour and play dough. Children are good at expressing themselves through art such as drawing and painting however there is a lack of new displays of the children's work on the walls to maintain an interest in a topic and create a sense of pride for the children in their work.

Children have made progress in their mathematical knowledge and skills. There are an increased range of games and activities which develop the children's understanding of size, space, shapes, weight and measure. Children were very excited at what would be in the suitcase today when doing the holiday theme, including small and larger clothes. Staff support the children well during different games and encourage children to think of more and less than and other mathematical concepts. A good range of jigsaws and games challenge children to problem solve. Children learn about numbers in their songs and every day activities and routines such as when preparing for snacks however this could be further developed. Children learn about three dimensions during model making, construction activities and computer exercises.

Staff know the children's abilities and interests well and plan activities accordingly however ongoing written observation records are inconsistent and lack detail therefore they do not give a detailed record of individual children's abilities and areas for improvement. Planning covers all areas of learning and reflect the different levels of skill. Gaps in children's knowledge are identified such as scissor control and are worked upon. Children benefit from recent changes to planning which include how to extend and challenge more able children. Some staff are adept at questioning and encouraging children's learning. Exciting topics introduce children to new and familiar experiences using a wide range of stimulating activities. Children are given time to enjoy free-play and whole group activities throughout the day and regular routines ensure all the children's needs are met. Staff use a range of methods and on occasions bring in real-life materials such as tools, baking, plants and insects. There is good use of space and resources are updated to maintain children's interest. Staff are committed and caring towards the children and foster a good learning environment where children make good progress in all areas of their development and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly in a warm and welcoming environment with friendly staff. The children know each other well and form good friendships. The children have a good sense of community as they get involved in community events including 'mini-fish' and 'village of the year' competition. Resources such as jigsaws and topics about different countries and cultures increase children's understanding of diversity and the

wider social world. All children can access the resources regardless of gender and all children are included in every activity.

Staff care very much for the well-being of children and provide assistance where possible to support families. Staff help identify needs and work very effectively with other professionals and agencies and ensure that children with special needs make excellent progress. Staff work very closely with parents and have regular contact to ensure consistency of approach. They keep parents informed of the care and achievements of their child. Children in particular make improvements in their speech and language, behaviour and self-confidence with good support from staff.

Children are well behaved and they concentrate during group activities and during their play. They are kept busy with interesting activities and high staff ratios ensure children are engaged. Children are polite, have good manners and help tidy away toys. They play very well together and learn to share and care for one another. Children have routines in place and respond very well to the guidance of staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well.

Children benefit from the very good relationships that exist between staff and parents. They are warmly welcomed into the setting and parents find staff approachable as they stay to talk about their child. Parents take an active role in the committee and help organise funds and activities such as a cheese and wine evening and a trip to the safari park. Parents are well informed about the setting and its policies through the prospectus, attend an introductory session and information evenings at the school. Detailed information is on display for example on the topics and the committee produce a very informative newsletter keeping parents up to date with events. Many parents also attend committee meetings alongside staff, taking an active part in the group. Children take home a range of creative work to show their parents. A new system of termly reports which are shared with parents ensures that all parents are now well informed about how their child has settled in and the progress they have made. It also shows individual targets for that child to help involve parents in their child's learning.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents receive good written information about the Foundation Stage and the progress their child is making along the stepping stones. An information evening on the Foundation Stage at school with involvement from the playgroup ensures parents are informed about the benefits of play. Parents are involved in the completion of the nursery transfer records and attend a parents evening to discuss the progress their child has made in preparation for school. However this is as the child leaves the playgroup and parents may find it beneficial if meetings could also take place before the end. Parents have lots of opportunities to learn about the group however if a family is new to the setting there is not a formal individual meeting for staff to get to know about the child. Children would benefit in their learning if staff had a greater knowledge of their abilities and needs from the outset. Parents and children value the excellent links that the playgroup has with the local school and the confidence and support that it gives them as they prepare for school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Sessions are well prepared in advance to provide a welcoming environment for children with a wide range of resources. Structured activities are well-planned to provide children with a stimulating and interesting environment and promote all areas of their development and learning. Children make good use of available space because staff organise the resources well both indoors and outside. Staff seek to make ongoing improvements regarding the storage of toys and improve the accessibility of resources to increase children's choice and independence. Staff have made improvements to how toys are rotated to ensure all resources such as jigsaws and games are used effectively by different children throughout the week. Children benefit from a smoothly run day with good staff deployment regarding who does what activities, with clear roles and responsibilities. There are good routines in place which the children are familiar with to ensure a well-organised environment for the children.

All required policies and procedures are in place, although some do not have up to date telephone numbers and procedural changes following recent changes in regulations, this could potentially compromise a child's well-being. Some of the documentation is stored in a chaotic manner however all staff and committee have a good working knowledge of policies and procedures and this contributes to children's health, safety and well-being. Medication records are not kept in a confidential manner therefore compromising children's privacy.

Staff and committee have been vetted and are suitable to work with children. The two supervisors work very well together when planning sessions, they have appropriate qualifications and experience, attend ongoing courses and meetings which they feedback information to all staff to ensure they are up to date. Children are well supported in their learning with all staff holding appropriate qualifications and experience. Staff undertake ongoing training such as food hygiene and first aid however all staff would benefit from attending a course in 'Birth to three matters' framework to further develop their work with children aged two to three years. Staff seek to improve their practice as they undertake appraisals. Supervisors daily evaluate activities and strive to improve the activities they provide for the children.

Children benefit from the good level of interaction and support from staff because of the high levels of staff to children ratios. Staff attendance takes place in an organised manner with good contingency arrangements in place however recording of this is inconsistent and does not accurately record daily that child to staff ratios are met. There is an effective booking in procedure ensures that conditions of registration and staff ratios are met. Children under three years have their needs very well catered for as individual sessions are set aside for this age group.

Leadership and management of funded children are satisfactory. Committee members and supervisors are enthusiastic and act as good role models. They have good working relationships and attend regular committee meetings. The committee and supervisors have implemented significant improvements in recent months to enhance the service they provide and are committed to building further the strengths of the playgroup. They work well with the local Early Years Development and

Childcare Partnership to make ongoing changes to benefit the care and education the children receive. The group as a whole have a clear vision and are starting to evaluate their practice and act upon the areas for improvement that they identify. The committee and staff are very committed and ensure that all children have access to a balanced nursery education and good quality care. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last integrated inspection the playgroup was asked to improve their knowledge of procedures to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff; ensure parents details were kept on the premises and improve awareness of lost or uncollected child policy. They were also asked to improve the range of challenges offered to older and more able children: in particular regarding the opportunities to solve practical number problems and the opportunities to use writing as a means of recording and communicating and to begin to form recognisable letters and to improve opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning and development.

Overall, the group has made good progress. Children's safety has been improved because committee and staff have a greater knowledge of child protection and in particular procedures to follow if they have concerns about another member of staff. Policies regarding lost and uncollected children are in place and staff have an awareness of these, improving children's safety. Registration forms now include all parents details including their name, address and telephone number ensuring they can be contacted in an emergency situation.

Planning includes reference to extending the more able children's learning and an increased range of games and activities ensure all children are making progress. There are increased opportunities to solve practical number problems through new resources and games and with the support and encouragement of staff children are making improvements in their knowledge of mathematical concepts. Children are encouraged to consider number problems such as when helping to lay the table however more practical opportunities on a daily basis could be used to develop children's awareness further. Staff have improved the opportunities for writing as a means of recording and communicating with access to paper in the role play area for example writing lists and booking forms when the theme was a travel agents. There has been an overall increase in use of writing, drawing, colouring in, tracing and dot to dot writing within the session and children are beginning to make progress and form recognisable letters. Children's learning and progress is benefiting from the increased liaison between staff and parents since the last inspection. New reports have been given to all parents informing them of their child's progress and targets for the staff and parents to work together on with the child.

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 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 operational plan and policies such as complaints, health and safety and recruitment to include relevant and current information following recent regulatory changes
- ensure all medication records are signed by parents and improve the confidentiality of recording.

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 staff's knowledge of children's starting points and the effectiveness of the ongoing assessment records.

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