



Hempsted Playgroup & Toddlers

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101762
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Inspector	Shirley Ann Jackson
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Registered person	Hempsted 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

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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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hempsted Playgroup and Toddlers is a committee-run pre-school group. It operates from a purpose built unit in the grounds of Hempsted Primary School. The village of Hempsted is on the outskirts of Gloucester City.

The playgroup is open every morning between 09.15-11.45 hours and Monday and

Thursday afternoons between 12.30 and 14.45 hours and can accommodate a maximum of 24 children. There are currently 30 children on roll aged from two to four years. Of these, 28 children are in receipt of funding. There are no children currently attending with learning difficulties, disabilities or who speak English as an additional language.

The building is owned by the group, which is a registered charity. They have sole use of the premises which comprise of the main play room, children's and staff toilet facilities, kitchen and storage cupboards. They also have an enclosed outdoor area.

Three members of staff are employed and parents provide additional support on a rota basis. Both deputies hold level three qualifications in child care. The group receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a generally clean environment where satisfactory standards of cleanliness are maintained. This means that some aspects of children's health are promoted as staff understand that keeping the premises clean helps to prevent the spread of infection. However, children are not fully protected from the risk of illness as a communal bowl is used for hand washing, both after messy play and before eating snack. When there are no paper towels available, children use one towel to dry their hands. The group does not have a policy on ill or sick children. These issues pose a risk to children's health as they are not fully protected from the risk of cross infection.

Children benefit from a range of healthy and nutritious snacks and are beginning to learn about healthy eating options. They are able to enjoy a range of fruit as well as a range of other snacks. However, staff prepare snacks in the kitchen and children are not involved in the preparation. A jug of drinking water is available throughout the session. However, children do not have the opportunity to pour their own drinks. This limits children's independence skills.

Children have regular opportunities to play outside where they enjoy fresh air and physical activity. However, this is planned and tends to be in fine weather. Children learn balance and co-ordination as they climb on the climbing frame. They adjust speed or change direction to avoid obstacles, for example, when riding wheeled toys outside. However, physical play is not always stimulating for more able children. On occasions, there aren't enough resources or activities to keep the children's interest or to stimulate and challenge them. Children take part in activities which develop their hand-eye co-ordination, such as, painting and using peg boards.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

The children are cared for in a welcoming environment. Although some safety precautions are in place, for example, the heaters are guarded, there is a lack of rigorous risk assessments in place. This means that some safety risks have not been identified and addressed, for example, access to the adult toilet where cleaning fluid is stored. There is no system to record risk assessments to ensure that these can be used to minimise hazards and help to prevent accidents. Consequently, children's safety is not promoted.

Furniture and resources are clean and well maintained. Staff check these as they put out or tidy away the equipment. Resources are suitable and safe for the ages of the children attending.

Security arrangements are satisfactory, for example, the door to the playroom has a safety chain which is used when all children have arrived. Parents collect their children from a member of staff at the end of the session. However, there is no lost child policy. This is a breach of regulations and means that children's safety and well-being may be compromised. There is no evidence that the group is covered by public liability insurance.

The group has sole use of a purpose-built building and outdoor play area. However, staff do not organise the available space effectively. There are areas of the room which are not used to offer activities to the children and the outdoor area is not used to its full potential. During hot weather, the temperature in the room steadily increases, and although staff are aware that the room is very hot, they take limited action to make it comfortable for the children.

Children's welfare is not adequately protected from the risk of abuse as there is no up to date policy and procedure in place. For example, there is no procedure if an allegation is made against a member of staff. The group's policy is out of date and does not reflect recent changes in the county's procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children have few opportunities to select activities for themselves, other than those put out by staff. Activities do not always provide sufficient challenge for older children. The group does not use the key worker system. This means that staff do not get to know individual children well, nor are parents effectively informed of their child's progress.

Opportunities to further extend children's language are sometimes limited. For example, staff do not make sufficient use of questions to encourage children to think and demonstrate what they know and understand. Staff have mostly positive relationships with the children and, as a result children are developing confidence and self-esteem. Staff generally talk and listen to the children during free play activities.

Children are generally happy at the play group and take part confidently in free play. Activities are set up in designated areas, for example, book corner and messy play

area. Children are generally able to move between activities and make choices from the activities on offer.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Staff have a limited understanding of the Foundation Stage and how to implement it in practice. Plans allow few opportunities to follow children's interest or to build on what they already know. Staff do not evaluate activities to enable them to move children on to the next stage in their learning. Children do not make enough progress because activities and experiences are not well enough matched to children's needs to provide a suitable level of challenge. Staff miss many opportunities to extend and develop the children through everyday, practical routines and during child-initiated comments. Children do not have free access to a wide range of resources which enables them to begin to learn independently.

The environment lacks excitement and interest. Time and resources are not used effectively to support children's learning. Observations and assessments of children's progress are not regularly and systematically carried out. There are currently no systems in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of nursery education.

Children begin to show awareness of rhyme in words and can think of other words which rhyme. However, opportunities for children to make links between initial letters and sounds are limited. Although some children can already write their name, staff do not routinely encourage them to name their own work or encourage those who cannot yet do so to have a go. Children aren't encouraged to write independently for different purposes, for example, as part of role play. Resources for writing are not always readily available, when they are put out, they are of poor quality and lack interest. Labelling around the environment is limited and staff do not routinely draw children's attention to this. Consequently children are not learning that text carries meaning. Limited use is made of children's name cards, for example, children find their name on their coat pegs. Children handle books carefully, hold books the correct way up and turn the pages. Children respond to simple instructions, such as, lining up to wash their hands. Some children draw and paint, sometimes giving meanings to their marks, for example, the child drawing her family.

Children show an interest in numbers and counting. They willingly attempt to count with some numbers in the correct order, for example, counting the bell chimes. However, opportunities are often missed to develop children's learning through practical play activities and daily routines, for example, snack time and registration. Children are not generally encouraged to set the table or to count chairs, cups and plates. Consequently, they are not always able to relate mathematical concepts to everyday routines and activities. Some adult-led activities are offered, for example, making shape pictures. However, children's learning is not enhanced by relating what they've learnt in a practical way, such as, finding shapes in the environment.

Children have access to some multi-cultural toys that reflect the wider community, for example, a welcome poster and dolls. Children have the opportunity to learn about other cultures, for example, Chinese New Year. This begins to develop children's awareness of diversity. Although the group has a computer, children have limited

opportunities to use this and other everyday technology. Children realise tools can be used for a purpose, for example, play dough cutters and scissors. There are few opportunities for children to learn about the natural world and the environment. Although children have grown seeds indoors, full use of the outdoor area has not been used for this purpose. Children do not dig, look for insects, or use natural materials found outside to extend their play. Consequently, children are not learning to freely explore and investigate their environment.

Children have some opportunities to show an interest in what they touch and feel, for example, playing with sand, water and clay. However, these activities are not available at every session. There are some opportunities for children to express themselves creatively, for example, free painting and drawing. Some examples of children's work are displayed on the wall. However, children's opportunities to explore and spontaneously create are limited. This is because they can't freely access a range of materials, other than those provided by staff. Children have regular opportunities to sing simple, familiar songs. However, there are few chances for them to make their own music with musical instruments. Children have limited opportunities to express themselves imaginatively as the role play area is not available at every session.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Information from parents relating to children's individual needs is gathered on children's registration forms. This includes information about allergies or medical conditions. As a result, children's needs are generally identified. The group has some multi-cultural resources, for example, a welcome poster, dolls and puzzles. Consequently, children are beginning to learn to value others in the wider society.

The group is willing to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities. However, the member of staff appointed as the special needs co-ordinator for the group completed training to support this role a number of years ago. As a result the setting is not able to ensure that the individual needs of all children are met and that each child receives appropriate adult support.

The group has a behaviour management policy in place. However, staff have a limited understanding of different behaviour strategies and their implementation is ineffective. Staff are unable to identify flash points when behaviour may become challenging. Some activities offered to the older children do not stimulate and interest them, therefore behaviour can become challenging. This is not always dealt with appropriately by staff. This can have a negative effect on children's self-esteem and confidence. Children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is not fostered.

Children generally behave well during the free play part of the session. However, there are not clear practices in place to encourage children to share and take turns. Consequently, children sometimes squabble over whose turn it is and how long they've played at a particular activity. Children relate and make attachments to members of their group and they seek one another out to play with. There are

occasions when opportunities to build on children's independence skills are missed, for example, they do not pour their own drinks. Children have limited opportunities to select activities for themselves, apart from those provided by staff. This limits their independence and sense of responsibility.

Partnership with parents and carers is inadequate. There is limited written information available to parents about the setting and what it offers. The brochure they receive has no information about the Foundation Stage or how the group will implement it in practice. Most parents spoken to are happy with the care their children receive. However, if there are concerns, parents feel that staff do not always take these seriously. Policies and procedures are poor and do not give accurate information because they have not been recently updated. Some legally required policies are not available, for example, a complaints policy and a complaints log. This is a breach of regulations and poses a risk to children's well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children's well-being is compromised because the setting is not organised effectively to meet the children's needs. Staff do not have a sound knowledge of the National Standards. They have insufficient knowledge of how to promote children's learning and development and do not know how to plan effectively to meet the individual needs of the children.

Organisation of space, time, adults and resources are limited. For example, full use is not made of the indoor and outdoor play areas. Staff spend time preparing snacks and drinks rather than sitting with the children encouraging social skills and interaction. Rota parents aren't given clear direction from staff and consequently, their support is not fully utilised to support the children.

The group's operational plan is poor. Due to the lack of relevant and up-to-date policies and procedures across all areas of the group's operation, there are significant gaps which could lead to children being inadequately protected from the risk of harm. For example, lack of up-to-date child protection procedures and the lack of comprehensive risk assessments. In addition, there are some breaches to regulations which include lack of complaints policy, complaints log and procedures to be followed if a child becomes lost or is uncollected. This makes it difficult to ensure that children's care is consistently managed.

Most of the required documentation is maintained, for example, an accident book. Attendance registers are kept to show that adult to child ratios are met. However, there is no record of visitors to the group.

The play leader is not appropriately qualified for her role. Staff have not attended significant, relevant training since the last inspection. There is no system in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision and staff are not able to identify how practice can be improved. This leads to weakness throughout the provision which have a negative impact on the children attending.

Leadership and management of the group is inadequate. Staff do not demonstrate a clear understanding of how to plan for the Foundation Stage. They are not effective in delivering it across all areas. Consequently, there are gaps in the children's learning. Recording systems, although in place, are not regular or systematic. Assessments are not used to inform future planning, this hinders the children's learning across all areas of learning. There is no system in place to monitor and evaluate the curriculum. Advice from outside agencies has not been used to help to move the group forward. This means that weaknesses in the programme are not addressed. Overall, the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group agreed to; carry out a risk assessment of all areas used; record details of risks identified in these areas and those arising from activities and show action to be taken to minimise the risks, review safety arrangements regularly, review group policies to ensure that they contain relevant information and reflect group practice and ensure that the group's child protection policy includes action to be taken in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff.

The group have made no progress in any of these areas and they all continue to be weaknesses which need to be addressed. Risk assessments are not in place and policies have not been updated, those missing have not been put in place.

At the last education inspection the group agreed to; improve planning to ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is offered, helping children to progress in all areas of learning, ensure that plans include opportunities for children to problem solve, use positional language, be introduced to new shapes and calculate, to explore and investigate within the indoor and outdoor environment, to undertake physical activities, to carry out regular assessments to identify children's progress, gathering information to show where children are at in their stage of learning, use these assessments effectively to inform future planning, to help children to move on to the next stage in their development, provide challenge for more able children and make greater use of time and the outside areas.

The group have made poor progress in all areas. Staff have changed their plans a few times recently. However, they still do not cover all six areas of learning at each session. Children have some opportunities to enjoy physical activity, but only when planned by staff. Children have looked at different shapes as a wall display shows work on triangle, square, circle and rectangles, but this has not been consolidated. Staff do not regularly observe and assess activities to see if the intended learning outcome has been met. Plans do not show how all children will be included. Observations of children are not regular or systematic and are not linked to planning. Consequently, staff do not offer activities at the appropriate level to help to move children on to the next stage in their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been one complaint since the last inspection.

A concern was raised on 16th March 2006.

The concerns related to:

National Standard 3 (care, learning and play)

A concern was raised that there was a lack of structure to the children's day with no set activities and no elements of learning or creativity.

National Standard 14 (documentation)

A concern was raised that there were no records held detailing the development of the children.

National Standard 12 (partnership with parents)

A concern was raised that there was a lack of feedback to parents.

We asked the provider to investigate, and from the evidence that they supplied there was no evidence that the National Standards were not being met and no further action was taken. The provider remains qualified for registration. The complaint made was not recorded in the complaints record.

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve organisation of the session particularly the use of space, staff, time

and resources

- develop and implement an action plan that sets out how the play leader will achieve a level 3 qualification
- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour
- produce policies and procedures which are in line with National Standards and regulations
- promote children's safety and ensure that precautions are taken to prevent accidents by ensuring that regular risk assessments are carried out and keep a written record of risk assessments
- provide information for parents of what to do if they have a complaint. This should take account of revisions to guidance to the National Standards made in October 2005. Ensure that a written complaints log is kept.

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage to include the stepping stones, planning, observations and assessments
- ensure that planning is effective and that it offers a broad range of stimulating, challenging and interesting activities which cover all areas
- ensure that activities provide children with appropriate challenge, especially for older children
- provide parents with written information about the Foundation Stage and ideas of how they can become involved in their child's learning
- introduce a system to evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education programme

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk