



## Happy Days Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	205255
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 December 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Valerie Fane
<b>Setting Address</b>	Marymans Road, Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 2QN
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<b>Registered person</b>	Susan Cother
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care, Out of School 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 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?

Happy Days Playgroup is a privately owned group that opened in 1972 and changed ownership in 1996. It operates from two rooms within a mobile unit in the grounds of St. Andrews First School in Hampton, Evesham and has an enclosed area for outdoor play as well as use of the forest school site. The group serves the local area and has strong links with the school.

The playgroup is open from 09:00 to 11:30 and 12:30 to 15:00 Monday to Friday in school term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 43 children on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

Five staff work with the children, all of whom have appropriate qualifications to Level 2 or above. The playgroup receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn about the importance of good hygiene routines as they wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. They have free access to the facilities and use them with increasing independence. They receive good care in the event of an accident because all staff have current first aid knowledge. Staff keep accurate records of any accident that occurs and ensure that these are signed by parents. Children are protected from cross-infection because the playgroup has a clear policy not to accept children who are unwell and this is enforced if parents send their child while they are still likely to be infectious.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop healthy eating habits. They enjoy a very interesting and varied selection of snacks each morning; such as a choice of banana, tomato, crackers, cheese and raisins. They exercise control over their eating because they can choose how much snack they want and are given as much time as they like to finish eating. However, children do not benefit from free access to drinking water throughout the session. Children with special dietary needs receive appropriate food because all staff are made aware of their allergy through clear information in the recently refurbished kitchen. Procedures are also in place to ensure that such children are able to participate in special occasions such as parties or birthday celebrations.

Children understand the benefits of fresh air and exercise because they play outside for part of each session in most weather conditions. In summer they make regular use of the outdoor area throughout the sessions. Older children also attend forest school regularly throughout the year in any weather except high winds. Children improve their climbing and balancing skills on the large climbing frame and bridge with support from staff readily available for those who need it. They run around outside chasing bubbles. They use a good range of bats, balls and stilts to develop their co-ordination and indoors they enjoy circle games such as 'Ring-a-ring-a-roses'.

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

The provision is good.

Children use premises that are suitable and are kept clean and well-maintained. The layout of the equipment is generally attractive and welcoming. Children see their own work displayed. They use a good range of high quality, well-maintained equipment; much of it stored in low level units for them to self-select.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where all risks have been minimised. Staff make good use of risk assessments to identify hazards and to take appropriate action. For example; they observe that the ramp to the playgroup is slippery in wet weather and request the school Governing Body, who have responsibility for maintenance of the building, to take action that has resulted in a non-slip surface being laid. Children learn to protect themselves in an emergency because staff ensure that all children, including those attending part-time, have regular opportunities to practise the evacuation procedures and keep a record of the

practises. Children learn to keep themselves safe in a variety of ways. They learn to use the climbing frame safely; to hold on with both hands while crossing the bridge and to wait for the mat to be clear before they jump off the platform. In forest school they learn not to step inside the fire circle when a fire is lit and to use tools such as sharp knives safely.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a sound understanding of the symptoms of child abuse and the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care. They work closely with Social Services when the need arises. Children improve their awareness of their personal safety because they develop good self-esteem, they learn to say 'no' to other children if they do not like their behaviour towards them and they talk about the dangers of going with strangers.

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

The provision is good.

Children of all ages settle well in the pre-school and develop good relationships with the staff; particularly with their key worker. Young children benefit from the staff's awareness of the principles of the 'Birth to three matters' framework that they use to underpin their adaptation of activities for this age group. Children enjoy joining in with favourite action songs such as 'Peter Rabbit's got a fly upon his nose'. They make peppermint creams for Christmas. They develop good manipulative skills as they spoon the icing sugar into the bowl, stir in the water and mould the mixture into shapes with their hands. They make choices about food colourings and decorations and increase their vocabulary as they describe the mixture.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a firm knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and understand the breadth of learning that children acquire from different activities. Staff are aware of each child's starting points because they work with parents to assess their child when they come to the group. They make detailed observations of each child's level of development and use these to inform their initial assessment on the school transfer document. Parents complete their own page of the document and discuss this with staff. Staff then plan an interesting range of activities that is closely linked to the appropriate stepping stones for the children involved to enable them to take the next steps in their learning. They evaluate activities and observe and record children's progress so that they have a clear picture of what each child has learnt.

Children develop many aspects of their learning through their visits to the forest school. They recall the way to the base camp, and then to the stream. They become independent learners because staff allow them to make mistakes in the route and then help them to think about what they have got wrong. They listen to instructions about what they are going to do in the forest that day. They find the stream and play in the water. They develop control of their bodies as they use the fishing nets to catch objects, both natural ones and the plastic ducks and frogs added by staff. They count how many ducks they have caught and solve problems as they decide how many are still in the water. They enjoy imaginative role play as they decide to wash the adults' boots. They explore the texture of the mud and the water as they enthusiastically

splash around and gain confidence in a new situation. They develop good self-help skills as they try to empty the water out of their own boots!

Children enjoy listening in a group to favourite stories such as 'We're going on a bear hunt'. They join in with the repetitive words; gaining awareness of rhyming and alliteration. They develop their understanding of mathematical language as they join in with the actions; going over, under and through the mud and the water. Most activities in the playgroup are well-presented, but children do not benefit from the stimulation of an attractively laid out 'cosy corner' with comfortable seating and displays that would encourage them to look at books on their own or with a member of staff.

Children have excellent opportunities to use different forms of technology. They play with programmable toys such as 'Bee Bot'. They show sustained concentration as they try to solve the problem of how to make him turn through a full circle. They work co-operatively with a partner to try to get him to cross the mat to each other. They learn to estimate as they guess how many moves Bee will need. Children use a computer program with good support from an adult. They develop hand control as they learn to manipulate the mouse. They follow instructions to complete the program.

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

The provision is good.

Children are settled in the playgroup because staff get to know each child very well and have an excellent understanding of their individual needs. Children develop a good awareness of our wider society because the playgroup provides a range of toys such as books, musical instruments, role play equipment and dressing up clothes to support their learning. They learn about other cultures and religions as they celebrate a variety of different festivals. They make cards and have a party at Christmas. They make candles for Diwali. They develop their awareness of the local community as they go on walks and have good links with the adjacent primary school.

Children behave extremely well. They respond very positively to the excellent role models provided by staff and their calm manner and clear boundaries for their behaviour. They learn to share toys and to take turns; for example when jumping off the climbing frame. They are helpful when it is time to tidy up the toys and put things away quickly when asked. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the good relationship that the staff have with their parents. Parents receive an informative brochure about the playgroup before their child attends and staff use flexible strategies to help new children settle quickly. Parents exchange ongoing information about their child through regular conversations with their key worker. Children are protected to some degree because parents are made aware of how to make a complaint to the regulator. A log is in place for the manager to record any future complaints that may be received, but the current format does not cover the recording of all complaints made against the national standards.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents receive information about the six areas of learning in the introductory brochure. They are involved in their child's ongoing learning because they receive information about the current topic through newsletters and through the planning information on the notice board. Children continue their learning at home because parents are also invited to a meeting each term where they review their child's progress and discuss targets for the next term. The targets include ideas for the children to do at home with their parents.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities receive good care because the playgroup staff liaise closely with their parents and, when appropriate, with outside agencies. These children benefit from the closely defined measurable and achievable targets set out in their individual education plan, and these are reviewed regularly. Staff attend additional training when appropriate to enable them to provide better care for such children. If staff identify children with particular needs within the group they discuss their concerns with parents and encourage them to seek help for their child.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children flourish in the well-organised nursery environment. They benefit greatly from the experience and expertise of the excellent team of staff who work with them, who are all committed to attending regular training to update and improve their good practice. They are protected from harm because the recruitment procedures are thorough. This ensures that all staff have undergone Criminal Records Bureau checks and are suitable to be in contact with children. Children's welfare is safeguarded because all required policies and procedures are in place. Parents also provide all necessary information and consents before their child attends the group and staff keep accurate records of the attendance of children, staff and visitors.

Leadership and management of the funded children is good. Children progress because the manager has a clear vision for the nursery education that aims to provide a purposeful and stimulating environment and curriculum. She leads a team of staff who work well together and she makes good use of each member's particular strengths to enhance the quality of care and education provided. As a team they carry out regular self-evaluations of their provision and are continuously looking to improve their practice to the benefit of the children attending. For example; they have recently changed the snack menu to provide a much more interesting and varied range of snacks that encourages children to try new foods and develop healthy eating habits.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

At the last inspection of care the playgroup was recommended to improve the procedures for recording medication given to children, to develop the child protection policy and to reassess the daily routine for the youngest children. At the last inspection of nursery education the point for consideration was to improve the opportunities for children to enjoy mark making in a variety of tactile materials.

Children's welfare is safeguarded well because there are now rigorous procedures in place for the recording of medication that include all required information and signatures from parents. The child protection policy has been updated to include information regarding the procedures to follow if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff or a volunteer and the manager is familiar with these procedures. The youngest children in the group now have their needs met well because they have more frequent opportunities for snacks and provision is made for them to have a rest if necessary.

Children receiving nursery education have much improved opportunities for mark making. They freely use a wide variety of materials, such as sand and icing sugar, for this purpose.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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):

- provide fresh drinking water for children at all times
- improve the format for the complaints log to include the recording of all complaints made against the setting that relate to the national standards.

#### **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 'cosy corner' to encourage children to look at books on their own or with adults.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)