



Humpty Dumpty Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218165
Inspection date	15 November 2006
Inspector	Olwen Pulker
Setting Address	Parish Rooms, Church Road, Codsall, Nr Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, WV8 1EH
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Registered person	Humpty Dumpty Playgroup Committee
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

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.

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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Humpty Dumpty Playgroup is run by a committee. It opened in 1962 and operates from the large room within the Parish Rooms in Codsall, South Staffordshire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the group at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:00, term time only. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 34 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, one receives funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and surrounding area.

The playgroup employs eight staff. Four of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

There are appropriate procedures in place for ensuring that the space that children use is hygienic, for example areas are cleaned daily, tabletops are wiped down and toys and resources are clean and in good condition. Children are learning good personal hygiene as they independently wash their hands after toileting and during messy play activities such as painting. However, children are not learning to routinely wash their hands before eating. Older children help themselves to toilet roll tissue when needing to wipe their noses. Children are protected from the risk of infection and cross-contamination through the effective implementation of the setting's policies and procedures, such as excluding children who are ill or infectious. Most staff hold current first aid certificates and there is written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment in place for all children. This consent is available on site so staff have ease of access to it if required.

Children benefit from a range of healthy snacks and enjoy a selection of fruits on a daily basis, for example banana, apple and grapes. Children have the choice of juice or drinking chocolate although they have limited opportunities to develop their independence by pouring their own drinks.

Children have good opportunities for physical play both indoors and outdoors. There is a large, secure turfed area to the rear of the building where the children have access to a varied selection of equipment such as a climbing frame, hoops, skittles, wheeled toys and sand/water play. When weather conditions are unsuitable for outdoor play, staff ensure that a different physical activity is available daily indoors. Children enjoy using a wooden climbing frame and slide, rocker, balancing beam and play tunnel to extend their physical skills and awareness of space. In addition, daily activities such as catching and throwing soft balls help them to develop their coordination satisfactorily.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have reasonable access to a varied range of well-maintained, good quality resources and activities. Few resources are stored at low-level within storage units and children access play equipment from the range that has been made available to them by staff. There is limited use of displays at child-height due to the building being a shared facility.

Information relating to child protection procedures is readily available and staff access training whenever courses become available. This helps to ensure that staff would know what to do if there was a concern about a child. Security and surveillance of children's arrival and departure is effective and children develop an understanding of what to do in the event of evacuation through regular fire drills which are undertaken in a child-friendly manner. Sensitive and timely reminders from staff help children learn to keep themselves and others safe as they play and use the equipment in their daily routines .

There are appropriate procedures available within the policy file to help ensure that children are safe, however at the time of the inspection there were some uncovered, low-level electrical sockets in areas used by children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are happy, content and occupied with a suitable range of activities which are planned by staff. They have time to enjoy their favourite activities, in particular physical play, role play, creative activities such as painting, cutting and gluing and woodwork. They are becoming competent in the use of tools such as scissors, sand paper and hammers. They confidently identify colours as they group dinosaurs and thread beads. Children show a great interest in books and enjoy listening to stories or discussing the pictures individually or in small groups with staff. They enjoy good relationships with supportive staff and those who are new to the setting are gaining sufficient confidence to begin forming friendships with others. Children are developing independence and self-esteem by taking responsibility for tidying away toys. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively when planning activities and routines for children under the age of three.

However, the mix of older and younger children within the same space does not always work effectively, particularly at whole group times.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff have a generally secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and apply this knowledge to plan and deliver the curriculum. Consequently children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Written plans provide suitable guidance to staff about focused activities and what children are intended to learn. Staff undertake observations and assessments of the children and key workers use these to complete a stepping stones profile for each child. Staff engage in children's play and challenge children by good use of questioning to extend their learning. Behaviour is well managed and this results in a calm and caring environment for children. They are sufficiently confident and content to work and play independently or in groups. Staff interact well with children and provide a comfortable environment in which children are able to learn and develop. However the environment limits the opportunities for children to self-select and is generally not stimulating at low-level. Adult-led activities are not always organised effectively and opportunities for extending children's learning through routine activities such as snack-time are often missed. In addition, the organisation of whole group times means that older or more able children do not have opportunities to extend their learning at these times due to the impact of the younger or less able children.

Children's early communication skills are satisfactory. They speak clearly and with confidence to both their peers and staff, expressing their thoughts and talking actively within their play. Children enjoy listening to stories; they sit well in small groups and listen with focus, contributing and responding to questions about the story as it is read. Children help themselves to books. They show respect for the books turning the pages carefully and putting them away after use. Although paper and pencils are freely available for children to use in their free play and they

'write' shopping lists when visiting the shop to buy their groceries, there are no name cards or labelling used and therefore few opportunities are available for them to see written words other than in books.

Children are beginning to count and use numbers well. Most count reliably to 15 and all enjoy singing number songs such as 'Five Little Monkeys'. Staff extend children's learning by introducing counting during free play and focus activities. They weigh play food on the scales and observe the dial as they add or remove items. Children are learning to recognise shapes such as rectangles as they make aeroplanes during woodwork. However, again due to the lack of labelling and displays at low-level there is limited opportunity for number recognition.

Children are introduced to a range of topics that help to develop their awareness of their environment and the world in which they live. They learn about living things as they observe the growth of flower seeds and bulbs which they have planted. Children learn about the significance of different festivals and customs and taste foods from various countries. They have some opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) through play equipment such as phones, electronic cash registers and computers.

Children move confidently and are developing good coordination skills. Some handle a range of tools and small equipment well, such as scissors, a hole-punch and paint brushes. They enjoy making mobiles using a variety of different materials, such as wool, cloth and shiny paper to develop their creativity. Their imagination is well developed as they shop for groceries or look after the 'babies' in the home corner.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are content and happy in the setting and those who are new to the group are supported well by key workers to help them settle and feel secure. Behaviour is good, with staff using positive techniques well to support and encourage good behaviour or deal with unwanted behaviour. Children are beginning to learn about other cultures through well-planned activities and topics, such as Chinese New Year, Australia Day and food tasting. Staff ensure that the resources positively represent individuals from the wider community, this helps children develop a positive attitude to others. There are appropriate procedures in place to support children with specific needs, with staff maintaining positive relationships with outside agencies and working closely with parents. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

There is an informal, relaxed and supportive feel to the setting and staff discuss issues with parents on a regular basis and obtain information from them to ensure consistency of care. Parents are welcome to stay with their children for as long as they wish when their children first attend. This allows them to observe the group in operation and provides reassurance about their children's welfare. The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding is satisfactory. They receive regular verbal feedback from staff and benefit from an informal, open-door policy where they are welcome to view their child's assessment records and talk to key workers about progress. Various information about the learning objectives and activities is available for parents through notice-boards and termly newsletters. Parents are invited to

become involved in their child's learning by providing materials for junk modelling, joining the parent's rota and sharing their skills within the group.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. A sufficient number of staff are appropriately qualified and all are supported to develop an effective team. They are given opportunities to further develop their skills, for example, attending training in various aspects of early years childcare and education. The manager works with the local authority advisor and there is some monitoring and evaluation of the practice in funded education.

Policies and procedures clearly outline how the setting operates in practice. Most records are well-maintained and organised to ensure they are easily accessible when required. However, information contained in some policies, for example the complaints policy, is not current and does not comply with the updated regulations of October 2005. Consequently, parents are not being kept informed of changes and children's welfare is not fully safeguarded. Staff are aware that the present method of recording children's accidents does not promote confidentiality and are seeking alternative documentation to address this issue.

Staffing levels are good and there is an effective contingency plan to cover for staff absence. Robust vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitable to work within the setting. Groupings of children and adult to child ratios are monitored carefully to promote the children's health and well-being. Overall the needs of all of the children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to amend the child protection policy to include procedures in the event of allegations being made against staff and to review registration arrangements. These issues have been satisfactorily addressed by the addition of a grievance procedure to the child protection policy and a staff member is stationed at the main entrance door to monitor children's arrival and departure. Children's presence is recorded in an attendance register. In addition, the provider agreed to implement a fire drill book and a cleaning rota. These are in place and fire drills are recorded as they take place once a term and equipment is thoroughly cleaned every half-term. These actions are effective in safeguarding children's welfare.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to develop systems of observation and assessment to help staff plan the next steps in children's learning. All staff record their observations of children's achievements which key workers use to assess the children's progress and to complete the stepping stones profiles. In this way they are able to identify children's strengths and weaknesses and plan further activities, with individual support if necessary, to help children progress in all areas of their learning. There were also to be increased opportunities for children to see and use numbers in practical situations and for simple addition and subtraction to be introduced into everyday situations. Children use numbers for counting and calculation during their free-play and adult-led activities but opportunities

to see numbers, for instance in the form of number lines or posters, remain limited and remains a recommendation from this inspection.

Finally, staff were to develop circle time to include time for children to be able to talk about significant events in their lives. Children confidently communicate with staff and their peers individually or in small groups but during whole group activities older children do not have opportunities to extend their learning due to the impact of the younger or less able children.

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.

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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):

- continue to promote children's awareness of personal hygiene with regard to hand washing before eating
- ensure that daily risk assessments are rigorous so that areas used by children are safe at all times
- review policies and procedures to ensure that the information shared with parents is up to date.

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 organisation and management of whole group activities so that children begin to sit quietly, concentrate, listen and respond to stories, songs and rhymes with enjoyment and attention (this also refers to care)

- provide more opportunities for children to become aware of number and word recognition to help promote their mathematical and language development.

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