



Lymm Village Hall Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315226
Inspection date	31 October 2006
Inspector	Joan Isabel Madden
Setting Address	Village Hall, Pepper Street, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 0JB
Telephone number	07790 762 143
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Registered person	Lymm Village Hall 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

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Lymm Village Hall Playgroup opened in 1972. It operates from one large room that can be divided into two in the village hall of Lymm village, Cheshire. The playgroup is a charitable organisation that is managed by a committee and serves local families in the area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 35 children on roll from two years to four years and of these 21 children are receiving nursery funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 to 12.00.

A total of six part-time staff work with the children. Of these, one is a qualified teacher and four have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. The setting is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from Warrington Sure Start Early Years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Sensible hygiene procedures are followed by the staff to protect the children from illness and infection. Tables are wiped down with antibacterial spray before the children bake and have snacks. Toilets are clean and properly equipped with soap, paper towels, warm running water, and a step to enable the children to follow accepted hygiene routines. The children are learning to understand simple good health and hygiene practices and follow healthy routines. They wash their hands before handling food, after painting and as part of toileting routine. They sit at tables to eat their snacks to avoid cross contamination of food. Children are treated appropriately for minor injuries, as staff are qualified in first aid and there is a fully stocked first aid box. Documentation relating to accidents and medication is correctly maintained helping to underpin sensible procedures. However, although forms are in place for parents to give permission for emergency medical treatment there are gaps where parents have not completed them.

Nutritious food and discussion promotes the children's good health. On inspection day they enjoy sliced apples, crackers and cheese spread. Children are learning about the value of food and what constitutes a healthy diet; they are told that crunchy apples are good for their teeth. They are sociable and chat to one another throughout snack time encouraging them to value times when they eat food. Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the session helping them to appreciate the healthy way to remain hydrated. They are also offered milk and juice to drink at snack times. Children have their health and dietary needs met because the staff work well with parents. The dietary requirements of the children are recorded onto their personal records and staff ensure children receive the appropriate foods for their requirements.

Although daily routines include some activities to help the children develop their physical skills, widen their boundaries, and develop a healthy lifestyle, insufficient emphasis is put upon this aspect of their care and education. The children do not have opportunities to play outside or go on local walks limiting their opportunities to appreciate the benefits of the outdoors. This also limits their opportunities to run around releasing energy and experience a sense of adventure. As part of the routine children are given opportunities to develop their physical skills indoors. This usually takes place for a short while at the end of the session when the other activities have been cleared away. They develop their climbing and balancing skills as they climb the slide and jump on the trampoline. They enjoy dancing to taped music. To develop their self-help skills and decision making skills children choose from a range of activities, learn to use the bathroom independently, put on their own aprons and assist in serving the snacks. The children are able to rest and relax in the reading area. Children new to the playgroup are given encouragement and support by the staff to help them settle and feel secure.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome in clean and organised premises which are presentable. Display boards depicting the children's work and the themes they study, help them to feel a sense of belonging.

Information for parents displayed in the foyer help them to feel valued and welcome. The room is used effectively to meet children's needs as it is organised into different learning areas to ensure they experience a wide range of activities. It can be divided into two rooms to allow the children to work in smaller groups. There is suitable furniture and equipment available to the children enabling them to comfortably take part in activities. The dedicated book corner is inviting as the books are displayed front facing, they are generally in good condition and there are comfy cushions and a mat for the children to sit on. As a consequence, the children make good use of this area.

The resources and equipment are well maintained, safe and very clean helping to protect the children's well-being. Particularly noteworthy are the dressing-up clothes that are clean, ironed and hung up in an organised way making them accessible and inviting to the children. Toys and materials are arranged for the children making it easy for them to access resources for themselves and develop their confidence and decision making skills.

Generally there are good processes in place for helping to keep the children safe. The premises are secure and there are tight procedures for the safe collection of children. The staff have devised detailed risk assessments, and as a routine the premises are checked against these before the children arrive in the morning. There are regular checks carried out on the utilities and fire equipment. Children are learning about the importance of being responsible and keeping themselves safe. They are encouraged to tidy up toys so others do not trip over them and are made aware of the importance of road safety.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice if necessary. There is a designated child protection officer. All staff have attended courses on 'Safeguarding Children'.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are secure, happy and settled and quickly become engrossed in activities that enable them to acquire new knowledge and skills. They take part in a wide range and balance of activities to promote their learning. Staff cater well for the handful of young children that are under three years. They adapt activities to make them manageable for them. At news time the children are divided into two groups according to age and the young children have a shorter session. This allows them plenty of opportunity to talk about their experiences and get to know the staff well without being overwhelmed or becoming restless. Throughout the session staff ensure they offer appropriate support to the young children new to the pre-school to help them settle and develop their vocabulary. They also operate a key worker system to help the children feel secure. Children enjoy exploring a good range of play materials including painting, small world scenes, construction kits, creative and mark-making materials. They confidently take part in role play helping to develop their imaginative skills. However, staff lack confidence and knowledge in planning and assessing against the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are positive, calm and confidently deliver activities that promote the Foundation Stage. Planning comprehensively covers all six areas of learning and there are clear learning outcomes identified for the children, who respond well to the challenges presented to them. The present theme is the 'Gingerbread Man'. The children are assessed against the stepping stones and the early learning goals. Assessments are used effectively to inform the parents of their children's progress. Adult-led and child-initiated activities create a relaxed, but purposeful learning environment for the children. Children are well supported in their play and the daily routine is accurately linked to the stepping stones. Staff support the children well in their chosen activities. They appropriately capitalise on unplanned opportunities to promote the children's learning. For example, staff are heard promoting the 'b' initial letter sound as children show an interest in the letter.

Children have good opportunities to develop their communication and language skills. They are encouraged to talk about events in their lives both at registration time and as they play. Throughout the morning staff spontaneously share story books with the children helping them to handle books and develop reading skills. As children join in with songs and rhymes they are exploring and experimenting with sounds. Their coat pegs are clearly labelled helping them to learn that print carries meaning. Linked to the theme of the 'Gingerbread Man', children are able to recall the story and enjoy joining in with the repeated refrains. A permanent writing and drawing area enables children to discover writing and drawing as a means of communication and learn that marks carry meaning. Children enjoy taking part in role play and dressing-up helping them to develop their imaginative and language skills.

As children complete puzzles and jigsaws they are learning how shapes fit together, to count and recognise numbers. Whilst making the gingerbread man the children use mathematical language and count the number of raisins used to decorate him. However, insufficient emphasis is put upon the children building up calculating skills. The children explore the properties of the flour and dough as they roll out shapes and are encouraged to describe the smells and textures. Themes successfully promote the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. In the recent autumn theme the children brought in items they had collected associated with the season. However, children do not have opportunities to go outside to observe their local environment or the natural world. Members of the community visit the playgroup helping the children to understand their roles in society. As children play with the cars and garage and other small world scenes they begin to make sense of the world. They construct with a range of construction kits and join pieces together to construct a train track. They discover how things work by exploring objects on the discovery table. Children enjoy exploring and experimenting with a good range of creative materials including painting, printing, collage, drawing and modelling with play dough. They respond to music through dance and movement sessions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff demonstrate a sound awareness of equal opportunities and special needs issues. There is a very good staff to child ratio and a key worker system in operation enabling staff to meet the children's needs more effectively. Children are very well supported in their chosen activities enabling them to extend their learning and acquisition of skills. They are comforted if upset

helping them to feel valued. At the beginning of the session, children are warmly greeted by staff who are interested in what they have to say there by boosting their self-esteem. Children feel special when their birthdays are celebrated. A strength of the setting is the wide range of toys and materials that promote the wider world including books, jigsaws, role play materials and dressing up clothes. Children's own cultures are valued by the staff that encourage the children to share their language and traditions with others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff welcome children with learning difficulties and disabilities. They are aware of how to access support and guidance from relevant professionals. If staff have concerns about a child they monitor closely and work in partnership with parents to determine correct course of action. The local authority will provide support and guidance with a plan of action if appropriate.

The positive behaviour policy is effectively implemented with good strategies to promote acceptable behaviour. Staff have high expectations of the children's behaviour. Children are very well-behaved; they are learning there is appropriate behaviour for different situations.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are involved in the running of the pre-school through the committee and volunteering at sessions, and as a consequence are well informed about the provision. Parents speak highly of staff and are particularly impressed with the extra support their children are given when appropriate. Additionally, they are provided with good-quality information about the setting and its provision through the display boards, coffee mornings, and are now receiving emails with news, forthcoming events and the curriculum plans. Parents are able to view their child's assessment folder anytime and receive a written report at the end of the year.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff meet regularly to evaluate activities and plan. Any general issues are discussed at these meetings. Senior staff work directly with the children and as part of the team which enables them to continuously monitor the provision, staff and activities. Staff evaluate children's progress by observing them and transferring observations onto an overview sheet to identify any gaps in their learning. Staff receive visits from the local authority advisors and respond quickly to any issues raised. Staff work closely with the parents and receive regular feedback from them regarding the provision.

Organisation is good, resulting in positive outcomes for children. Staff have a good understanding of the conditions of their registration and how to meet the standards. They have a secure knowledge of how to vet staff to ensure that children are well protected. Group sizes, a key worker system and staff deployment contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Generally records, policies and procedures work in practice to underpin the good care of the children although issues have been identified with the committee member vetting records, complaints log and the visitor's records. Children follow a sensible routine that includes a free-play session, snacks, adult-led activity, group discussion time, singing and story time. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the staff were required to improve safety and provide the children with more opportunities to experience different kinds of print and reading materials in the role play area. The lights in the rooms are no longer a hazard ensuring that the children are cared for in a safe environment. Staff often relate role play to a theme as with the present 'Gingerbread Man' and signs and books are displayed for the children helping them to relate the story to print as they retell and act out the story.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- develop staff knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and link the provision for the under threes to the framework
- improve documentation in relation to the following: committee member's vetting records, complaints procedure, seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment and the visitors record.

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):

- increase children's opportunities to develop their physical skills (also applies to care)
- increase the children's opportunities to develop their calculating skills in mathematics and find out about features in the place they live.

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