

Maytime Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	144622
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Inspector	Jennifer Liverpool
Setting Address	101 Clapton Common, London, E5 9AB
Telephone number	020-8809-0993
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Registered person	Hackney Muslim Women's Council
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 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Maytime Playgroup opened in 1981. It is owned by the Hackney Muslim Women's Council and is managed by a board of trustees and associates. The playgroup operates from two base rooms on the ground floor and basement of a three storey house in Clapton within the London borough of Hackney. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each week day for 48 weeks of the year. Morning sessions are from 09.30 to 12.30 and afternoon sessions from 13.30 to 16.00.

There are currently 40 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties.

The playgroup employs eight staff to work with the children and of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is maintained because staff implement acceptable hygiene procedures to ensure that germs and the risk of cross infection is minimised. For example, children are encouraged to wash their hands routinely such as before eating snacks, after visiting the toilet and when they have finished painting. Additionally, staff wipe down tables before use and keep the floor clean throughout the day. Children know that they wear protective clothing when participating in messy play and will help themselves to aprons. Some staff hold valid first aid qualifications and as a result of this, children can receive appropriate care in the event of minor accidents. Written information is obtained from parents regarding children's medical history and dietary requirements and they give their written consent for staff to administer medication to their children.

Children are well supervised when taking to the toilet and the younger ones are given appropriate support to develop their awareness of personal hygiene. Occasionally, the care needs of younger children are not always fully met, particularly during toileting. This is because the setting has not considered the arrangements for children who are not yet toilet trained. Furthermore staff rely on parents to provide intimate care when they arrive.

Children are offered fresh fruits and vegetables for snacks each day. They enjoy eating slices of apples and carrots. Staff help children to understand food that is good for them through simple discussions, providing topical themes and activities about food and pictures of various foods on wall display. They are offered milk to drink and drinking water is available. Children have some opportunities to access fresh air when visiting the library. Their physical development is supported through a range of adequate play equipment and they are developing skills for riding, steering and climbing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are put at risk because the provider has not carried out relevant checks to determine that staff who are employed are suitable to work with children. Some staff have a very basic understanding of children protection issues, whilst others lack knowledge of the different types of abuse; are unclear about the signs and symptoms and are not familiar with the policy. In addition, the policy is not fully in line with current legislation and therefore, children's welfare will not be safeguarded. Fire safety equipment is maintained and children have opportunities to practise emergency evacuations through regular fire drill practises. Although, the outdoor play area is an identified emergency exit route and is no longer in use because of extensive building works outdoors. Overall, children's safety is not given enough consideration because the provider has not taken responsible measures to protect them from harm or danger.

Children are not able to leave the premises unsupervised because door handles are placed out of their reach. Staff ensure that children are supervised when visiting the toilets as these are located off the main hallway and when using the basement room. Children have sufficient space to play and there are suitable facilities for rest and relaxation. They have safe access to toys and activities that are set out for them on a daily basis and to some low level storage units. There is an adequate range of developmentally appropriate toys and equipment for children. With the exception of some books, most resources are in fairly good condition.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are fairly happy when they arrive and many separate from their parents with little encouragement. Each child is greeted on entering the setting and made to feel welcome. All children are encouraged to collect their name cards from the table and post in a child size letter box. Younger children are beginning to recognise their name cards and some are given support by parents and staff. They show a general interest in the range of activities that are set out for them each day. Staff are familiar with the Birth to three matters framework; however, they are not making much use of it in order to fully promote the learning outcomes for children under three years as activity plans and assessments are mainly appropriate for children receiving nursery education.

Children enjoy playing in the role play area and a satisfactory range of play materials such as cooking equipment, play foods and props, enables young children to pretend, thus developing their imaginative skills. Staff interaction during this activity is appropriate as they support children's language and communication skills through asking questions that encourage children to respond. For example, young children talk about making tea and coffee for mummy and daddy and pouring milk in the cups. Children have daily opportunities to paint freely and participate in adult led painting activities. They are developing a growing awareness of shapes and some can count up to 10. Children enjoy singing in groups and young children are beginning to join in simple discussions during the circle time session.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making sound progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. This is because staff have a secure knowledge of how children learn and the curriculum for nursery education. Children are generally motivated to learn as they readily approach activities that are set out on table tops and at floor level when they arrive; they have independent access to some of the resources, particularly those that are stored in open low level shelves such as construction sets, drawing materials and books. As a result of this, children are able to make some choices for themselves.

Children are offered a reasonable range of activities that are purposeful and provide them with experiences across the six areas of learning; however, children do not always get the best out of planned activities. This is because it not clear how activities will be adapted or extended to meet the individual needs of children in order that they can all participate fully. Staff have some knowledge of children's capabilities through general observations. However, assessment is carried out infrequently and is mainly about what children are not able to do rather than what they can do; the next steps in their learning are not clearly identified and the information gained from assessments are rarely used to inform planning. Consequently, this impacts on children's progress.

Children have a generally good attitude to learning as they readily participate in a range of activities on offer. They are eager to talk and share their experiences about what they did at weekends with their peers during circle time and many of them show confidence as they sing independently to the group. Children cooperate well when working as a group and share resources such as paint pots and brushes during painting activities. Children behave responsibly during tidy up time and help put the toys away with little prompting from staff. Children see to their personal needs when visiting the toilet and washing their hands; however, their independence is not encouraged at snack times as staff set up the table and serve children their food and drinks.

Children use the book area frequently. They look at books independently and show good book handling skills. Children enjoy story time sessions and they listen to stories from cassette tapes. Staff provide children with opportunities to practise developing their memory skills; learn to name and recognise letters of the alphabet; and develop their early writing skills. Overall, children's communication and language skills are being promoted. Children are able to sort plastic fruits into groups of colours, and they can count to 15 and beyond, although at times staff count along with them and on these occasions the activity is not challenging enough for the more able children. Children are developing an awareness of mathematical patterns as they create butterfly prints through painting and fit in puzzle pieces. They show interests in shapes and are developing an awareness of simple additions and subtractions through singing rhymes such as 'five currant buns'.

Children learn about their family structures, the roles of people they know, animals and the environment. For example, they talk about different members of their family and visits to the doctors; the different types of animals and where they live and they have opportunities to go on trips to the library and occasional visits to the park. Children have access to a range of construction materials and they are able to build and create their own design. Although a tape cassette is available for listening activities, there are insufficient opportunities for children to examine objects to find out more about them; look closely at similarities and differences of materials or to discover and be able use every day technology. Children's imaginative skills and creative development are encouraged through activities such as drawing, different painting techniques, sand play and role play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are made to feel welcome as each child is greeted on entering the room. Children come from a variety of backgrounds and their individual needs are known and respected. There are a number of children who have more than one language and because members of the staff team speak various community languages, children receive appropriate support. The setting is inclusive and encourages children of all abilities to attend. There are systems in place to support children who have learning difficulties. For example, a staff member has been identified to advise and support other staff members who work with children of various abilities and to liaise with parents and other professionals. However, infrequent assessments and a lack of detailed planning means that activities are not always catered to the needs of individual children. A suitable range of activities and resources develops children's understanding of diversity, for example, multi-racial dolls, puzzles and books depicting positive images of race and gender, although few resources reflect disability. A themed topic such as 'ourselves' helps children to appreciate each other's similarities and differences. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff receive relevant information about each child before they are placed in the setting. This helps staff to get to know children's individual needs. Information about the setting is made available to parents through a brochure, written details on the notice board and the availability of policies. However, parents are not fully informed about the procedures for complaints. Parents are kept informed of their children's general well-being, they know that assessments are carried out on their children and they are encouraged to attend parents' evening meetings; however, the systems to formally share children's progress are not yet developed. Staff are beginning to encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning through providing work such as alphabet letters recognition and early writing exercises that parents can do with their children at home.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The provider is in breach of the regulation relating to the notification of significant changes. There are major structural alterations in the outdoor play area due to the development of extensive building work from the neighbouring property. As a result of this, the outdoor play area has not been in use for children to play for a number of weeks resulting in a change to the use of the premises. In addition to this, the outdoor play area has been identified as one of the emergency exit routes and is used as an area for gathering children in the event of an evacuation. Consideration has not yet been given with regards to the safety arrangements for children. This will have an impact on the welfare of children. There are inefficient systems in place for checking the suitability of persons to work with children. The provider has failed to carry out checks to assess the suitability of a few staff members. This places children at risk. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The management team encourages staff to undertake training, yet the manager does not have a level 3 qualification and is not familiar with changes to legislation. As a result, staff are not well informed of relevant matters such as child protection procedures. Some staff members are currently working towards a level 3 in childcare and education. This will help to support children in the setting. The manager is responsible for holding staff meetings to discuss planning and assess children's progress and delegates responsibilities for another staff member to deliver the curriculum. All mandatory records are in place and kept securely; however, accident records are incomplete as not all are countersigned by parents.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Staff are secure in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn and as a result of this children are making satisfactory progress. However, infrequent assessments and a lack of detailed planning impacts on children's learning. The management and staff are committed to supporting children to learn and have attended training, although the monitoring of the programme is informal and consequently, children have insufficient opportunities to become more independent; develop skills to investigate and to explore the use of information technology to further develop their understanding of how and why things work. On the whole the setting places more emphasis on learning and the programme for children's nursery education is acceptable.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection, the setting was required to develop an action plan that sets out how staff training and qualification requirements will be met; ensure premises are secure so that children are unable to leave unsupervised and develop and implement an action plan detailing how at least one staff member will be on the premises at any one time. With the exception of the manager most of the other staff hold appropriate child care qualifications, which helps support the care and learning of children. Door handles have been raised above children's reach to prevent them from leaving the premises unsupervised. There are now two staff members who are qualified to administer first aid. This means children can receive appropriate care if there is an accident throughout the course of the day.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting was judged to have some significant weaknesses and a number of key issues were raised to improve the provision for nursery education. The setting was asked to develop staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage; the teaching methods and strategies to promote positive behaviour. Staff now have a secure

knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are able to deliver an appropriate curriculum programme and as a result of this, children are making satisfactory progress. Also, staff have a consistent approach to behaviour management and this helps children to understand what is not acceptable behaviour. The setting was required to further develop the systems for planning and assessment to ensure that all areas of learning are covered and that children's learning is sufficiently supported. This specific requirement is still undergoing further development in order that all children's learning is fully supported.

The setting was also asked to improve children's self help and independence skills; develop the provision for children for whom English is an additional language; ensure staff have a working knowledge of the Special Needs Code of Practice; provide sufficient resources for the Foundation Stage curriculum and build partnership with parents. Staff generally encourage children to develop self help skills and independence during activities, however, it is not always promoted during snack times. There are appropriate systems in place to support the needs of children who are learning to speak English. Staff are familiar with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and there is a coordinator on staff to provide support for meeting children's needs. Staff are continuing to work in partnership with parents by making sure that they are available to talk to parents about their child each day. Staff also invite parents to attend meetings so that they have opportunities to share their views and expectations.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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

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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 satisfactory.

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:

- ensure that there are effective procedures in place for checking that staff are suitable to work with children
- develop and implement an action plan that sets out how the manager will achieve a level 3 qualification
- ensure that the fire safety officer is notified of any changes to the premises

- develop staff knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations and set in place a procedure to notify Ofsted of significant changes or events.

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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- increase staff knowledge of how to use the snack times to help children develop independence skills
- provide more opportunities for children to explore and investigate how and why things work and to use information communication technology to support their learning
- further develop planning to make clear what resources are to be used and how activities can be adapted to meet the individual needs of children
- improve the system for monitoring and evaluating the provision for nursery education particularly in relation to assessing and recording children's achievements and the use of evidence gathered to plan the next stage of their learning.

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