



Holbrook Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113525
Inspection date	11 January 2007
Inspector	Jill Steer
Setting Address	North Heath Hall, St. Marks Lane, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 5PU
Telephone number	01403 265851
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Registered person	Holbrook 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?

Holbrook Playgroup is a committee run group which opened in 1981. It operates from North Heath Hall in Horsham. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.30 during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from two to under five years on roll; of these, 36 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the local area. The playgroup currently supports one child with learning difficulties and also supports one child who speaks English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs 10 members of staff; of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications, one member of staff is working towards a qualification and three are unqualified.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children greatly benefit from daily opportunities to enjoy outdoor play. Whatever the weather children are encouraged to venture outside, as they choose, as long as they are suitably dressed. Whether wearing hats, gloves and wellies or sun hats and sun cream, the children demonstrate real pleasure in outdoor play. For example, they roll hula hoops down the grassed slope and chase happily after them; and they throw small hoops with concentration, aiming to get them to land over the legs of an imaginatively placed upturned table. Suitable activities are planned which help develop children's hand and eye co-ordination. For example, rolling out the dough using either the rolling pin or their hands, kneading it into shapes and pressing cutters into it to create animal shapes.

A healthy selection of snacks are offered such as fresh fruit and vegetables, bagels and bread. Some children enjoy the freedom of choosing when they wish to have their snack; following the sequenced pictures of how to collect a plate, sit down, spread their own snack and pour their own drink. When they have finished they helpfully put their used plates in the washing up bowl, to leave a clear space for the next person at the table. Other children sit down together at a set time to have their snack. These children, although older, have fewer opportunities for independence at this time. For example, staff tip the raisins onto their plates which they then pass to them and cut and peel the apples for them. Water is available in jugs for children to help themselves to a drink whenever they are thirsty. There is also a choice of milk or water with their snack, which ensures they remain hydrated.

Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene practices through everyday routines and activities. They know when to wash their hands; for example, after using the toilet, painting, playing outside and before eating. However, older children all wash in the same water which increases the risk of infections spreading. A clear sickness policy is shared with parents so they know when to keep their children at home, protecting other's from infectious illness. All staff attend suitable first aid training to ensure they are able to treat children's minor injuries and to care for them if they become unwell.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Regular risk assessments are carried out to ensure children play safely indoors, outdoors and on outings. Each day staff check the premises inside and out to ensure the environment is safe for children. For example, they check emergency exit doors can be opened and entrances are monitored to ensure nobody can enter undetected. Venues for outings are risk assessed as part of the planning, to ensure staff have knowledge of any potential problems which can then be included in their planning. For example, making sure children wear suitable clothing and footwear on a visit to the bottle bank.

Staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures. They know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care, which ensures they act in the children's best

interest. However, the written policy is: insufficiently detailed to include procedures to follow should an allegation be made against a member of the staff; and does not include the telephone numbers for reporting concerns.

Children benefit from a welcoming physical environment. They arrive happily and settle well; needing little support from their parents or the staff, who are on hand ready to greet and talk to them. The pre-school is arranged each session into specific areas of activity, which the children can move between freely to enjoy their chosen activity. For example, in one room they may choose to play in the popular role play area; then go to the next room for quiet reading; followed by a spell outside running around.

There is a good range of toys and resources available, these are in very good condition and cover all learning areas. The equipment is well maintained and replaced if it becomes damaged, to ensure children's safety and that they are able to use it for the intended purpose.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff support children in the setting extremely well, providing them with plenty of praise and encouragement. They help children express their thoughts and ideas and follow their individual interests. Comprehensive planning covers all areas of learning and ensures children benefit from a broad range of activities and experiences.

Children are very happy and settled within the setting and benefit from stable relationships with the established staff members. Children arrive confidently and quickly settle as they make independent choices about their play. They are keen to learn and are encouraged to try out new skills, which fosters their emotional wellbeing and helps them to achieve well. Younger children learn from a range of activities that are stimulating and well balanced. They delight in choosing hands on activities, such as constructing junk models with boxes, bottle tops and corks. This captures their interest and provides many opportunities to explore and experiment, effectively supporting the children's progress across all areas of learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and children are making steady progress through the stepping stones. Frequent observations inform staff of children's progress, enabling them to plan for the next stage of each child's individual development. They plan and provide a wide range of interesting topics and experiences, which engage children and cover all areas of learning.

Children enjoy getting fully involved in themed activities. These are well planned and presented, with positive learning intentions which arouse their natural curiosity. However, there are few opportunities for children to develop their confidence by making independent choices about the resources they wish to play with.

Throughout the day children are focused and engaged in play. Staff are clear about their roles and engage children in the wide range of activities available. Children have warm and friendly relationships with both staff and each other, which gives them the confidence to ask questions in order to develop their thinking. However, older children have fewer opportunities than younger children to develop their independence skills and to practice what they can do for themselves. They demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning and are curious and eager to explore the environment.

Children count confidently in a variety of situations during everyday activities. For example, they count out the money to pay for their shopping in the role play shop and join in with singing number rhymes and songs. Children help staff sort the numbered bottles into the correct sequence, counting to identify the number that follows 6 is 7, for the 10 green bottle song.

Children become aware of their environment and the world around them, through a wide range of activities planned to arouse their interest and curiosity; staff take advantage of every opportunity for children to learn. For example, whilst playing with the train track they discuss whether the train is going to Horsham or London, and whether the member of staff is in London.

Children choose to play comparing and matching games on the laptop computer, which they manage competently, sliding their fingers across the touch pad and clicking. They learn the correct terminology, such as 'cursor' and 'programme'; staff guide them when needed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

A very friendly atmosphere welcomes children and their families to the setting. Partnership with parents is extremely good. Parents often spend time in the nursery supporting the staff and children as they join in with the activities. Staff keep parents well informed about their children's progress and development, through newsletters and daily discussions. The planning is clearly displayed to show the topics and activities for each term, which provides parents with clear details of forthcoming events and Foundation Stage activities. Each child takes home a report when they leave, which shows the progress they have made and their achievements. Children are visited in their own homes prior to them starting in the setting. This enables staff to see them in their own environment behaving naturally and children are reassured when they meet again in the setting.

Children demonstrate a sense of belonging as they share their experiences about their own lives and families. They are introduced to other cultural traditions than their own through themed work, which helps to develop a positive attitude and respect for others. The selection of resources available such as books, puzzles and small world figures, provide children with a positive view of a variety of people in everyday situations. Children are treated with respect, helping them to feel good about themselves and become confident young people. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children behave very well; they share, take turns and play together harmoniously. Staff are calm and consistent; reinforcing and praising children's good behaviour, encouraging their feelings of self-worth. Staff evaluate each incident using a specific format to identify how best

to manage it. This provides a valuable insight into how children may have been provoked and why. Children with additional needs are welcomed into the inclusive environment; staff provide appropriate levels of additional support as necessary, including working with outside agencies as required. For example, ensuring more able children are suitably stimulated through careful planning and organisation. Systems are in place to ensure children are fully supported and their needs met through co-operation between staff, parents and outside agencies.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by experienced qualified staff, who have been appropriately vetted to ensure they are suitable to work with young children. Induction training, policies and procedures work well in practice ensuring the efficient and smooth management of the nursery. However, some policies and mandatory documentation require updating to fully comply with the National Standards.

Leadership and management is good. The management have a high regard for the staff who work together very well as an established team. Clear communication systems enable them to provide a well-balanced programme of activities. Individual staff training needs are identified by individual staff members, in consultation with management, to ensure a broad skill base covering all areas within the staff team. This ensures competencies are developed in all areas, for the most effective outcome and benefit to children's learning; demonstrating their commitment to providing good quality care and teaching. Management and staff evaluate the service provided. There is a strong commitment to creating a rich learning environment for children. Staff are competent within their roles. They have good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, which enables them to plan a well-balanced range of activities in a well organised environment. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to: amend the policy for uncollected children to comply with Ofsted and social services regulations; to review the child protection policy to include procedures to be implemented if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

The policy for when children are not collected now complies with current regulations; but the child protection procedure has not been amended to include a procedure to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

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.

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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):

- update policies and procedures in line with current guidelines

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 opportunities for children to make choices from a range of resources
- further increase opportunities for children to develop independence

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