



Happy House Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	309328
Inspection date	17 January 2007
Inspector	Judith Anne Kerr
Setting Address	Spring Meadow, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 5LX
Telephone number	01772 462 420
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Registered person	Jenny McMahon
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?

Happy House Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1985 and operates from two rooms in a community centre. It is situated in Spring Meadow, Clayton-le-Woods, near Chorley. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday, Tuesday, and Friday from 10.00 to 14.00, Wednesday 09.30 to 12.30 and Thursday 12.00 to 15.00, term time only. The group offers a service during school holidays on three days a week. The children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 43 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with disabilities.

The pre-school employs six staff. Five of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because practitioners are active in following current and appropriate health and hygiene guidelines. For example, cleaning rotas are in place and surfaces are wiped down with anti-bacterial wipes at appropriate times during the session. Good routines are in place for changing nappies. The children are developing effective self-help skills as they learn to wash their own hands at appropriate times of the day. A clear sick child policy is in place ensuring that children who are ill are excluded from the setting. If a child becomes unwell at the pre-school they are comforted and parents are immediately contacted. Minor injuries are dealt with appropriately as a significant number of staff hold first aid certificates. A well stocked first aid box is located accessibly where the children play. As staff are qualified in first aid they understand the procedures to follow in the event of a child sustaining an injury. The required documentation is maintained relating to accidents and medication. However, parents are not always required to countersign medication records to acknowledge the entry and this may pose a risk to children's health.

Drinks and snacks, such as cheese and crackers, chopped grapes and segments of apple and satsuma are freely available for children to help themselves. This ensures that children are well hydrated and are not hungry. Children's individual health and dietary needs are met successfully as staff work well with parents to gather, record and review the relevant information, such as children with allergies. Tablecloths on the tables and the encouragement of good manners help the children to enjoy their packed lunches.

Children learn the importance of healthy living through topics explored. They understand that fruit and vegetables promote good health and physical exercise makes them hot and that their hearts beat faster. The organisation of the day provides children with opportunities to develop a range of physical skills and gain control of their bodies as they ride on bikes, climb, slide and balance on stilts or play with soft-play shapes. Fine motor skills are well developed as children manipulate jigsaws and play dough and handle small tools such as scissors, hole punches and cutters.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play and learn in a bright and stimulating environment. Some colourful displays of children's independent art work, photographs and posters create a purposeful learning environment. Toilet areas are designed to enable children to have privacy and rooms are heated to an appropriate temperature. A quiet area with soft cushions is available for children who want to relax or chill out. There is an extensive selection of resources provided which are safe, clean, plentiful and meet the differing needs of all the children who attend the pre-school

group. Children are free to choose their own resources and activities. This encourages their independence.

Most reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Good procedures are in place for the safe collection of children and risk assessments of the premises are carried out on a regular basis. However, the kitchen is accessible to the children, fire evacuation procedures are not clearly displayed and there has not been a recent practise drill. As a result, children's safety may be at risk. Children are learning about road safety when they go on outings. Staff help them to follow defined procedures for crossing the road to keep themselves safe.

Children are well protected because staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse, know the procedures to follow and who to contact in the event they have concerns about a child. The child protection policy is shared with all parents to ensure they are aware of the staff's responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are starting to develop self-help skills and are encouraged to become independent as they learn to put on their painting aprons and dress themselves in play situations with dressing up clothes. They are happy and confident, develop warm relationships with staff and this helps them feel settled and secure. Staff encourage children to say goodbye to their parents which contributes to developing trusting, secure three-way relationships. Staff interact well with the children as they play and learn. Young children are beginning to learn right from wrong as staff gently explain to a young child why he should not stand on a toy.

Children are interested and involved in the activities provided and confidently make their own choices from the wide range of activities available. The children enjoy singing rhymes and listening to stories. They join in with the actions while singing 'fishes in the water' and 'dingle, dangle scarecrow'. Stories, such as 'Do Your Ears Hang Low' encourage the children to share the props from the story sack and identify different body parts. These activities help to reinforce and extend language skills. Staff have recently had training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are committed to implementing it to ensure the needs of the younger children attending the pre-school are fully met.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff have an awareness of the Foundation Stage and early learning goals, which is reflected in the varied range of play opportunities planned and provided for the children. Planning is linked to topics with clearly identified learning outcomes for children. There are systems in place to assess what children like and already know when they start at the pre-school. However, the planning of focused activities lacks detail and does not reflect the needs of children with varying abilities. Staff do not make effective use of assessment opportunities to inform future planning and predict the next stages of children's learning. Consequently, the links between planning, assessment and observations are not complete. Staff make good use of spontaneous role play situations to develop children's thinking

skills. For example, children enjoy their play in the pet shop; staff extend their learning by asking them about the different animals and where they live. Areas of continuous provision have been introduced to enable children to consolidate skills they have learned. However, this is not yet fully developed to allow children to have independent access to allow them to count, match, make patterns and extend their mathematical skills.

Children are happy and settled. More confident children speak clearly and purposefully with adults and other children as they play in the home corner and with the train set. They are secure in the routines of the pre-school, knowing that they need to take off their shoes prior to dressing up in the variety of costumes provided. Children independently select activities and are able to explain what they are doing. For example, a child explains that she is making lion biscuits, from play dough, like the one in the zoo. Friendships are being formed as children play alongside one another together and independently. Children enjoy listening to stories, are able to handle books correctly and sit for sustained periods of time. There is a clearly defined writing area which allows children to practise their increasing skills using a variety of materials, such as felt pens, pencils, paper clips and hole punches. Child-height display and divider boards enable children to proudly display examples of their emergent writing. Mark making materials are available in other play areas, such as the construction site and pet shop; this is in order to extend children's experiences of writing for a purpose. Children recognise simple shapes, such as triangles and squares which are cut out on the display boards and singing songs such as 'five currant buns' encourages children to develop an awareness of calculation. Children have the opportunity to recognise their name as they self register on arrival. However, there are limited other opportunities to enhance their recognition of letters, words and numbers as there are few examples within the environment of the pre-school.

Children enjoy regular outings in their locality. Visits to the nearby farm and pets being brought in to the pre-school enable children to develop a positive attitude towards living creatures. Technology is used well within the setting to promote children's learning. Children are developing a sense of time as they eagerly discuss with staff the next visit to the farm and what they saw last time. Sensory opportunities allow children to explore the textures of natural materials such as sand, water, saw dust and shaving foam. Children's imagination is extended as the children dress up as a mermaid, skeleton, spiderman or batman. An extensive range of creative opportunities enable children to express their ideas using a variety of media including paint, clay, glue, feathers and tissue paper.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to a varied range of resources and play opportunities which reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. They particularly enjoy finding out about christenings, Bar Mitzvah and Chinese New Year. Such opportunities allow children to appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live. The children incorporate visiting children with disabilities in to their group and include them in their play. All children are welcomed into a sharing and inclusive environment. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Frequent praise and encouragement enables children to develop their confidence and self esteem. Children are well behaved and benefit from a calm and consistent approach which is

promoted by all members of staff. All children are treated with individual care and respect. Children are developing a kind and caring attitude towards each other. This is demonstrated by a child sharing the dough with another who has none and again as one child gets an apron for a younger one who is playing in the water without one.

Children benefit from the friendly relationships shared between parents and staff. Parents are warmly welcomed into the playgroup both at the beginning and at the end of the session. Staff and parents chat informally at handover times discussing any issues relating to the care. A parent's notice board within the pre-school keeps parents informed about the provision and what their children are doing. The setting seeks relevant personal information from parents when they register their child to ensure that they are able to meet their care needs. Parents are made aware of the complaints procedure and systems are in place to record complaints or concerns from parents.

The partnership with parents in receipt of funding for nursery education is good and this has a positive effect on children's sense of belonging. Parents receive written information about the Foundation Stage and Early Learning goals. Furthermore, they can discuss their children's progression through the stepping stones at any time with staff. This ensures parents can be fully involved in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective procedures are in place for the selection and vetting of staff. A good induction procedure and probationary period forms a firm basis for staff employment. Most staff are qualified, consistent and work well together as a team. Staffing levels are organised to ensure that children receive good levels of support throughout the day. Staff arrive in good time to organise the rooms to ensure that children are able to engage in play as soon as they arrive. Space is well organised to provide children with a balanced range of activities. Children move around their immediate environment with confidence and ease. The required documentation relating to the continuity of care for the children is in place and stored securely. Most of this is completed appropriately.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good and contributes to children's progress towards the early learning goals. The manager recognises her commitment to supporting staff and developing their roles within the pre-school. Monthly staff meetings, annual appraisals and ongoing staff training contribute towards the professional development of all staff. The manager is aware of the issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of nursery education.

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 provider agreed to request consent for photographic or video images of children. The required consent is now in place.

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):

- ensure children are not able to access the kitchen; display procedures for the evacuation of the building and carry out fire drills on a regular basis
- ensure parents always countersign the medication record to acknowledge the entry.

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):

- evaluate the planning to ensure the needs of more and less able children are identified and used to predict the next stages of children's learning (also applies to care)
- increase the print in the environment to enhance children's recognition of letters, words and numbers
- further develop opportunities to allow children to increase their understanding of mathematical concepts and consolidate their existing 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