

Hepworth Playgroup and Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311286
Inspection date	02 May 2007
Inspector	Karen Cockings
Setting Address	Village Hall, Towngate, Hepworth, Holmfirth, Huddersfield, HD7 1TJ
Telephone number	01484 680070
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Registered person	Hepworth 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?

Hepworth Playgroup and Pre-School was registered in 1980. It is run by a voluntary management committee of parent representatives. The setting operates from the lower ground floor of the village hall at Hepworth, near Holmfirth, West Yorkshire. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. The setting is open every weekday, in school term time. Sessions are between 09.00 and 11.30 for two- to three-year-olds on Monday to Thursday. The three- to five-year-olds attend between 12.40 and 15.10 on Monday to Thursday and between 09.00 and 11.30 on Friday. All children share access to a fully enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 55 children on roll. Of these, 29 children receive funding for early education. The playgroup supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

A team of six staff work with the children, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have daily opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise, which helps them to keep fit and well. There is easy access to an interesting outdoor area, which they are able to use freely at most times. Staff use the area very well and set out a varied range of resources there, including table top activities for those children who do not wish to play active games. A covered area provides shade and protection from the elements and there are safety surfaces beneath climbing and balancing equipment. Children thoroughly enjoy playing outdoors. They devise their own obstacle courses as they run between equipment and steer wheeled toys in and out. They demonstrate the different ways in which they can reach the slide, either by climbing up the ladder or crawling through and over tunnels. They make large circles in the air as they play with ribbons and love to dance and skip in response to music. Activities, such as drawing, modelling with dough and clay and making jigsaws, help to develop hand-eye coordination and manipulative skills.

Healthy eating patterns are strongly encouraged. Snack menus include a good variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, many of which the children help to prepare themselves. They talk together about what they like to eat and are able to identify some more unusual fruits, such as mangos. Staff link snacks to themes and topics where possible. For example, children know that they are cutting circle shapes as they prepare the bananas for the fruit salad. A water dispenser on a low-level table enables children to help themselves to drinks whenever they are thirsty.

Children are protected from the risk of infection because staff follow safe hygiene practices. Some attend relevant training and they pass on new guidance and information to others in the team to ensure that they are working consistently. Gloves and aprons are worn when preparing foods and changing nappies. Children are encouraged to manage their own personal care. They sing songs together about hand washing and confidently respond when staff ask them why this is important, calling out that they need to 'get the germs off, so they don't go into our tummies'. They begin to think about the effects on their bodies when they have been exercising and during role play they talk with staff about the clothing they need to wear in hot and cold weathers.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and welcoming environment where staff give high priority to keeping them safe. They ensure that outer doors are secured once all children have arrived and they carefully manage collection arrangements. The playroom is bright and inviting with lots of posters and displays, including many examples of children's own work. The space is organised well to provide safe and comfortable areas for play. For example, there is a cosy book corner where children gather for group times or if they just want to read quietly by themselves. Daily checks and regular risk assessments ensure that the premises and equipment are safe for children's use. Staff act promptly if they spot a potential hazard, such as spilled water, and they warn children to stay away from the area until it is safe.

Children enjoy a wide range of toys and play materials to promote their play and learning. Many are stored in boxes and shelving units at child height so that children can make their own choices. They learn how to use equipment safely as they play and during daily routines. For

example, they know that they should not put knives in their mouths in case they cut themselves and older children use knives carefully when helping to prepare food. Regular involvement in fire drills helps to raise awareness of the procedures to be followed in an emergency situation.

Staff have a sound understanding of their responsibilities with regard to child protection and know that they would report any such concerns immediately to the person in charge. Guidance materials are available for reference including up to date local procedures and telephone numbers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in playgroup and are settled and happy there. Most arrive confidently, are familiar with routines and quickly find an activity to interest them. Staff sensitively support children who are new to the setting, giving them reassurance and helping them to feel included. Key workers make a point of speaking to new parents in order to assist the settling in process and parents are encouraged to stay with their children for as long as they feel it is necessary.

Children benefit from a warm and stimulating environment, where staff are responsive to them and organise a varied range of activities to support their play and learning. For much of the session children are free to choose whether to play indoors or outside. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and children know how to behave at different times. For example, they know that they gather quietly on the carpet at group times and they listen and respond well. Relationships are warm and positive: children interact in a lively way with staff and with each other and they play cooperatively together. Staff are familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework, using it effectively in their planning and recording, to meet the needs of the younger children attending.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and use their knowledge well to help children to make progress in their learning. They interact very positively with children and make good use of resources, such as the large abacus and number friezes, to extend and reinforce learning. Effective questioning techniques help to develop children's thinking and use of language.

Most children separate confidently from their parent and are eager to try new activities, often seeking out a friend to play with them. They like to use the wheeled toys together, deciding who will push and who will ride behind. They enjoy each other's company at the snack table and work cooperatively together as they design and build models. They persevere well as they work out what materials to use and carefully select the resources they need. Staff encourage them to be independent and have high expectations of what they can achieve. As a result, children begin to manage their own needs well. For example, they know what to do when they are thirsty and many confidently pour their own water from the dispenser.

Children have many opportunities to engage in conversations and they communicate well with adults and with each other. They are confident to express their own needs verbally, explaining to staff that they do not want to play outside or that they do not need their coat because they have long sleeves. They listen attentively to stories and join in enthusiastically with favourite songs and rhymes. Children like to look at books, both independently and as part of group activities. They have opportunities to draw, paint and practise early writing skills as they use

clipboards and make lists. Some children are beginning to write their own names legibly on their work.

Children develop good counting skills because they count and become familiar with numbers as part of daily routines and planned activities. For example, they count each other at group time, using appropriate resources, such as the abacus, to help them. Some are able to work out how many more boys there are than girls in the group. They use numbers spontaneously in their play. For example, they count the number of jumps they are making on the trampoline and how many children are waiting to use the computer. Staff make very good use of opportunities to develop children's awareness of shape and size and children show a keen interest. They find circles in their environment and are eager to identify all the things they can see that are round.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is promoted very well. They enjoy lots of outdoor play where they can see the countryside around them and experience changes in the weather. Staff invite a varied range of visitors to the setting so that children can learn about different roles within their community. For example, they have been able to meet a local midwife, a sculptor, dentist and builder. They are given the time and appropriate materials to develop their own design skills as they use boxes and tubes to make models. Their interest in the use of technology is heightened through access to resources, such as tills and calculators. They have used a digital camera to take their own pictures of shapes in their environment and many use the computer competently to follow simple programs.

Children have opportunities to experiment with different media and explore their own ideas. They roll and pat play dough into shapes, use tools to cut up dough and clay, and try different painting techniques. They explore what happens when they mix colours and materials together, such as dry paint with ice, and they begin to describe textures. There is a varied range of musical instruments and children particularly like to play on the large colourful xylophone attached to the wall outside. They like to play imaginatively, setting up a tea party outside near the playhouse. Staff vary the home corner to stimulate children's play and encourage them to use their imagination. Children have free access to many resources to promote their creative play but there is potential for further development and greater independent access to sensory and craft materials.

Staff use planned activities and the continuous provision effectively to reinforce children's learning. For example, they talk with children about the shapes they have made in the dough and as they cut up fruit together. There is a happy atmosphere at the setting, where children know that their achievements are valued. Staff spend time talking with children about their work and they make regular observations, both focused and spontaneous, to find out what children enjoy and how they can be helped to make the next steps in their learning. Staff are deployed well to ensure that children have the support they need. They compile personal development folders for all children, which include examples of their work and photographs of children at play, as well as their own observations and assessments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Parents and children are welcomed warmly by staff who recognise the importance of giving friendly greetings as they arrive. They get to know individual children well and find out about their interests, likes and dislikes. Conversations with children about their homes and families help them to feel that they are valued and important. Children's work is displayed around the

setting and their achievements are acknowledged. For example, staff show real interest in the models and pictures children make, asking questions about them and making sure that they are kept safe until parents arrive.

Children learn about different roles in their community through many planned visits to the setting. They have opportunities to find out about the work people do and sometimes to have a go themselves. For example, a builder shows them how he builds a wall and the children learn to mix the mortar and how to place the bricks. They develop an awareness of different cultures and needs as they engage in activities and use resources that reflect their community and the wider world. They see posters on display, taste a variety of foods and find out where they come from. As they play with small world figures, they talk with staff about why a person may need glasses or a white stick to help them if they have sight problems. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff and management are very positive about the importance of inclusion within the setting. They work closely with parents and other professionals to help children with disabilities to participate fully. Advisory teachers and support workers are welcomed into the setting and their advice is valued. Staff take effective measures to support children and to promote inclusion, such as learning simple signing with the children and using it with the whole group as they sing songs and rhymes together. A diary system shared between the setting, school and parents ensures that there is effective communication between all parties involved in children's care.

Children's behaviour is good. They respond well to the gentle guidance and encouragement given. Staff offer meaningful praise and comment positively on children's achievements, which helps to build children's confidence and self-esteem. For example, they acknowledge when the children have listened really well at group time. Children develop a sense of responsibility and are eager to help with tidying up and watering their plants. They know how to ask politely if they need help or would like a turn with a favourite toy. Staff help children to understand what is expected of them and to show care and concern for others.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The setting provides parents with a varied range of information about the service and uses communication systems, such as newsletters and noticeboards well. A helpful welcome booklet explains to new parents how the service is run and gives information about staffing, the key worker system and the learning and play experiences offered. White boards are used effectively to draw the attention of parents to current topics and forthcoming events. Staff also spend time talking to parents at arrival and collection and have rearranged opening times in order to ensure that this is possible. Parents are encouraged to share any concerns and the complaints procedure is displayed for them to refer to if necessary.

Parents are asked to complete an 'All about me' record about their children before they are admitted, which gives practitioners useful, personal information to assist the settling in process. There are ongoing discussions about children's progress and parents are able to see their own child's development records at any time. Staff also plan open events when information can be shared more formally. They are keen to find ways of involving parents in their children's learning. For example, parents are invited to share skills and experiences with children, such as by helping with a special baking activity or demonstrating what they do in their working life. Newsletters include information for parents about how they can continue some play and learning activities at home. There is potential for further development in this area to build on the successful partnership already established.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a well-organised environment which promotes their welfare, safety and learning. The well-qualified and experienced staff team use their knowledge of childcare and development to provide a good variety of activities to stimulate children's learning. Space and resources are used effectively, both indoors and outside, so that children can make choices about their play. Staff are deployed well to ensure that children are given appropriate levels of care and supervision. They provide effective support, which enables children to benefit fully from the activities offered.

Record keeping systems are maintained appropriately, contributing to children's health, safety and well-being. A collection of policies and procedures underpin the smooth operation of the setting and are regularly reviewed and updated. In some instances, however, procedures lack necessary detail to comply fully with requirements. There are clear recruitment and vetting procedures in place, so that suitably checked and qualified staff are appointed.

Leadership and management of the educational provision is good. Members of the management committee have regular contact with the provision and a clear sense of direction. They ensure that parents know who they are and how they can express their views and suggestions about the setting. The manager works alongside staff, providing a good role model and source of support. Weekly staff meetings ensure that staff have regular opportunities for planning and review of the service. An appraisal system has been established, which helps staff to evaluate their practice and identify areas for future training. There is a strong commitment to promoting an inclusive environment and enabling all children to take an active part in the setting.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to implement a system of appraisal to monitor staff effectiveness in promoting children's welfare and development. A system of annual appraisals has now been established, which helps staff to identify areas of strength and for improvement. The manager also monitors and supports in an ongoing way and there are weekly team meetings where issues such as planning are discussed. These measures help to ensure that staff routinely evaluate practice to support children's well-being and learning.

The provider also agreed to improve the complaints procedures and the documentation for accidents. The complaints procedures have now been updated to reflect recent changes in regulations and to show the contact details for the regulator. These procedures are displayed on the noticeboard and are easily accessible to parents. Accident records include sufficient detail to provide parents with an account of accidents and the action taken. As a result, parents are kept well informed about significant events affecting their children's welfare and they know how to follow up any concerns.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that opportunities for children to access technological equipment be improved. A computer area is now easily accessible to them together with a range of programmable toys and equipment, such as calculators, tills and telephones. Children use digital cameras to take photographs of their environment. These resources provide children with opportunities to operate simple equipment and use everyday technology as part of their play.

Improvements were also recommended to aspects of planning systems and to the completion of children's development records. Staff now ensure that planning is clearly linked to the stepping stones and all use the same observation and record keeping systems to identify the next steps in their learning. This means that there are effective systems in place to plan for children's progress towards the early learning goals and to record their development.

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

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 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 review policies and procedures to ensure that all necessary detail is included.

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):

- consider ways of improving children's independent access to a range of creative and sensory materials
- continue to develop further opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning and to share what they know about their child.

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