



## Nether Heage Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	206823
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Tara Street
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Village Hall, School Lane, Heage, DE56 2AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 850124
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Nether Heage Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. 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?

Nether Heage Playgroup opened in 1982 and is committee run. It is situated in the village of Heage and operates from the Village Hall. A maximum of 25 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open for three morning sessions a week from 09:00 to 11:30 during school term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 24 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local catchments area and surrounding villages. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup employs five members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health and hygiene is effectively protected and promoted. They are developing a clear awareness of their own personal hygiene as they follow daily routines and are encouraged by the staff to be independent. Older children fetch their own tissues when they need one and dispose of them hygienically. Younger children are supported to blow their own noses and put the tissue in the bin. Children confidently go to the toilet unaided. Their understanding of maintaining healthy practices is supported by the staff, who offer timely reminders and role model good practice which minimises the risk of cross infection. The premises are clean and well maintained. Children are encouraged to help with daily tasks, such as wiping table tops and collecting wipes prior to snack, helping to develop their understanding of hygiene. Children are appropriately cared for in an emergency as all staff hold first aid certificates and all relevant documentation is in place with regard to children's health and welfare. Accident records contain parental signatures ensuring they are fully informed of any injuries. Written permission for seeking treatment in an emergency also supports children's welfare. A clear sickness policy offers parents information about exclusion periods for children who are unwell, ensuring children are not placed at risk of infection and illness.

Children are provided with a healthy and nutritious variety of snacks. Children sit in small family groups with staff at snack time, making it a pleasant and social occasion. They are provided with foods such as fresh fruit, toast and occasionally participate in the preparation of foods. Children enjoy helping to make soups, pizzas and cakes. Children are encouraged and supported to be independent at meal times. They confidently choose and pour their own drinks and pass along dishes for others on the table. Drinks of water, milk and juice are provided at snack time and children are able to access fresh drinking water throughout each session. Staff actively seek information about any individual dietary needs and ensure any food or drink provided is suitable for the children.

Children are developing a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and physical fitness. They experience a wide range of regular activities both inside and outside which develops their co-ordination and balance skills. For example, children enjoy playing with hoops, balls, tunnels and enthusiastically join in with skittle games. Staff encourage children to be active and develops their understanding of how exercise helps to keep their bodies strong through discussion and planned activities. Children are developing an awareness of how their own bodies move through music and movement activities and ribbon dancing. Children are learning to become aware of their bodies needs, such as putting on sun screen on sunny days and coats and hats in cold weather to keep warm.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from warm and welcoming premises where the rooms are decorated attractively to stimulate their learning. They have access to a range of appropriate toys and resources that meet their developmental needs, are clean and safe to use. Daily activities are suitably organised

to enable children to make individual choices about their play. Children's sense of belonging is promoted as they each have a chair and drawer to store their personal belongings and comfort objects.

Children are cared for in a generally safe and secure environment. Operational procedures for the safe conduct of outings is in place, however, these are not consistently carried out or recorded. The setting has recently devised a new system but this has not yet been implemented or reviewed to ensure it promotes children's safety. Children experience good levels of supervision and appropriate safety equipment is in place to ensure hazards are reduced. Staff are well deployed within the setting and the premises are kept secure whilst children are present. Children play without risk of harm or injury because staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of risk assessments and carry out ongoing checks. A policy and procedure for lost or uncollected children is in place and understood by all staff. Children are developing a good sense of safety. They know the procedure to follow in an emergency as staff regularly practise an emergency escape drill with them.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities with regard to child protection procedures. All members of staff have attended appropriate training. The written statement relating to the child protection policies and procedures is made available for parents.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled within the environment. They have a warm, secure and caring relationship with the staff. The children are confident and keen to access the range of play activities on offer, such as puzzles, construction, collage, role play café and shape printing activities. They develop appropriate socialisation skills as they look out for each other, support and assist one another. Older children help younger ones to zip and button their coat ready for outside play. Children freely move from one area to another and are spontaneous in their play and interactions with other children and adults. Staff participate in children's play and learning and their comments are listened to and valued. They encourage children to be confident, independent and develop their self-esteem. Children take turns to ring the tidy up time bell, enthusiastically help to put away toys and join in with group activities and story time. The setting has started to incorporate the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework within their planning and as a result staff are developing an understanding of what younger children are expected to learn through their play. Regular assessments of children's progress are carried out, however these are not effectively carried through to their individual records and, as a result, children's next steps are not clearly identified.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals as staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage and ensure that all areas of learning are covered over a period of time. Staff know which aspect of learning the activities are related to and record children's achievements on an ongoing basis. Detailed planning is in place, which focuses on learning through play and ensures the children are

purposefully occupied. Assessments are carried out regularly through planned focused activities. All staff are involved in assessing children's progress and share this information with the appropriate key worker. However, recording of purposeful information is not always consistent. Children's achievements are currently marked off on a development list, however, this does not clearly identify their individual progress or appropriate next steps in learning.

Staff regularly talk to the children and engage in their play and learning. However, knowledge and understanding of appropriate questioning and discussion techniques to extend children's learning is not always consistent. For example, at one activity children are told to add or remove excess paint with no discussion to extend their understanding of why they are doing this. At another activity children are asked a range of extension questions about the colour, smell and texture of pot-pourri.

Children are very responsive and are able to reason, readily question and have a positive approach to new experiences. They are enjoying a range of resources and equipment to develop their interests and play well alongside each other. They are confident and eagerly get involved in the activities on offer. Children concentrate well at individual activities, such as making mothers day cards and within group activities. They behave very well throughout the session, showing a caring attitude towards others as they invite them to join in with their play. For example, when a child wishes to join in with the role play café activity another child gets him a chair to sit in and offers him a piece of cheese. Most children are confident to speak in small groups and use language to express themselves. They are beginning to recognise their name through the labels on their chair and registration cards at snack time. Children are developing their mark making skills through a range of resources which they have independent access to. For example, children confidently use stencils of dinosaurs to draw around and develop their pencil control and hand eye co-ordination skills. Children's writing and letter recognition are further developed as they are supported to write their name on any work they produce and all efforts are given praise.

Through a variety of planned activities children use and are beginning to understand a range of mathematical concepts, such as weighing out ingredients for a baking activity. Children enjoy activities, such as number dot to dot, to develop their understanding of sequence and develop their knowledge about days of the week with magnetic cards. Construction activities are planned in which children are able to sort different sized pipes and wheels, and use their imagination to build objects. However, some opportunities for spontaneous mathematical language, counting and calculating within daily activities are not used to promote children's understanding. For example, discuss patterns during painting activities or counting plates at snack time. Children are beginning to develop a sense of the wider world as they examine a range of objects and materials. They explore wood through magnifying glasses and count the number of rings and investigate the properties of magnets. Children are developing an understanding and sense of place through outings in the community and are learning about growing and caring for plants and vegetables. Their technology skills are enhanced as they have a range of opportunities to use battery operated computer programmes, calculators, shop scanners and tape recorders.

Children's physical development is strongly promoted through a balanced programme of activities. Children's fine manipulative skills are enhanced with the use of small resources, such as using scissors during craft activities. As well as planned outdoor activities, free play sessions

provide opportunities to run freely, balance on stepping stones, catch, throw and kick balls. Children are fully supported to develop their potential and activities are adapted to ensure all can participate and experience success.

Children use their imagination and creative skills through a variety of activities. They enjoy playing with play dough, which they cut, roll and make shapes using a variety of tools to create 'cakes' and 'hot dogs'. Children confidently name colours and shapes when painting and drawing and use a range of materials to express their ideas. Their imagination is further promoted as they use the role play area, which is changed daily to offer stimulation. Children enjoy imagining they are doctors in a hospital or hairdressers and post office workers. Staff support ensures children understand how to use this area and the varied range of resources available.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff treat children with equal concern and their ideas and choices are valued. They take the time to get to know the children and discuss their dietary and learning needs with their parents. However, information on their culture, home language or any religion followed is not gathered or recorded, potentially impacting on the ability of the setting to offer appropriate care and promote children's well-being. The setting meets the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as they have a good awareness of how to assess their needs and adapt activities to offer suitable levels of challenge. Staff work closely with parents to discuss children's needs and liaise with relevant specialists to ensure their requirements are met within normal routines.

Children develop an understanding of the lives of others through planned activities, such as stories and topics. This is further developed through themes on Chinese New Year and holiday destinations which promote their knowledge of the wider world. Children regularly use resources that reflect diversity, such as small world toys, books, puzzles and role play equipment that depict positive images of age, gender, ability and culture. Children are cared for in a secure environment where the emphasis is on positive behaviour. Staff apply consistent boundaries and offer regular praise to promote good behaviour and develop children's self-esteem. A behaviour management policy is in place and is shared with parents to ensure the care offered is appropriate. Children are very well behaved and respond well to discussions about behaviour. They happily share toys and take turns with equipment. For example, children find other children who showed an interest in the same toy to say they have finished with it. Their knowledge and understanding of the rules is promoted well through discussion and general day to day interactions with the staff and other children. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's ongoing care needs are generally met as staff have daily verbal communication with parents. Some written information is available to parents introducing them to the aims and policies of the setting. However, parents are not made fully aware of how any concerns are addressed as staff do not have a sufficient understanding of the complaints regulations or the procedure to be followed. This includes recording the National Standard to which the complaint relates and responding to parents within 28 days. Parents value the friendly relationship they have with the staff and feel welcome and supported in the setting.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. Parents are appropriately informed about what children are expected to learn and can see the weekly planning. The setting provides parents with an information booklet, which helps them to understand the Foundation Stage and how children will progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their children through a questionnaire at the start of the placement. This includes information about their interests, likes, dislikes and any areas parents wish their child to make further progress in. Ongoing contact is maintained with parents through a key worker system and daily discussions about the child's learning and development. The setting maintains individual development records and parents are aware that they can view their children's records on request and discuss these with staff. Children's learning is progressing well because the key workers develop close relationships with parents and encourage them to continue some learning activities at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children's care and welfare is generally promoted as the staff team are appropriately qualified and deployed to provide sufficient levels of support for the children attending. Children are happy and relaxed within the environment and staff work well together to ensure children's needs are met. Children's records and staff details are stored securely and are available for inspection. There is a positive attitude towards training, which allows staff to continually increase their knowledge and experience to provide appropriate activities and care for children.

The setting is overseen by a committee who delegate the day to day running to the manager and staff. There is a close working partnership with the committee and regular contact is maintained to discuss the needs of the playgroup. Records, policies and procedures which are required for the safe and effective management of the provision, are not all up-to-date with current guidance or the regulators contact details. Information for parents does not accurately reflect the care and learning offered by the setting and therefore the sharing of accurate information is not always effective. The setting is currently updating some of these documents and have a positive attitude towards reviewing all documentation to ensure parents and staff are fully informed of the correct policies and procedures.

Leadership and management of early education is good. Management is actively involved in all aspects of the provision and is aware of the strengths and weakness of nursery education. A continued commitment to address the areas for improvement is shown to ensure children's progress continues. There is a good understanding of the development needs of the staff and a thorough training schedule is in place, which ensures training, such as 'planning for the Foundation Stage' is in place. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles as key workers and work together well to share information and offer each other support. The manager and staff work closely with the local authority to monitor and evaluate the nursery provision to ensure that children make progress, and to develop appropriate actions plans to improve any identified areas. This is demonstrated in the changes made since the last inspection and as a result the quality of children's care and learning has improved.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection recommendations were raised in relation to; ensuring that there are operational procedures for the safe conduct of any outings; that the address and telephone number of the regulator is included on the complaints procedure and that parents are appropriately informed. The setting agreed to ensure that written parental permission is sought for the seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment and to improve the information shared with parents relating to policies, procedures, children's activities and progress. The setting has developed an operational procedure for the safe conduct of outings; however, this has not been fully implemented at the time of inspection. The address and telephone number of the regulator has now been added to the complaints procedure, however, this has not been updated to reflect current guidelines or shared with parents to keep them informed of the changes. Written permission is in place for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment which ensures children are kept safe in an emergency. Information is shared with parents on a daily basis about their child's progress and parents can access the policies and procedures upon request.

At the previous education inspection the setting was set three actions; devise a behaviour management strategy which provides a framework for managing behaviour consistently by all staff and to introduce effective teaching methods in large group activities. The setting agreed to carry out ongoing evaluations of the teaching methods, staff deployment and learning outcomes for children and to improve children's awareness of other cultures and beliefs. The setting has implemented a clear behaviour management policy which the staff apply consistently, ensuring children's well-being is well promoted. The staff have attended a range of training courses and developed their planning of activities to enable children to experience a range of teaching methods. Effective staff organisation ensures that children's learning outcomes are met. Children's awareness of other cultures and beliefs is now effectively promoted through a wide range of resources and planned activities and topics. Parents now can be assured that children's education is progressing well.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 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.

### **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 satisfactory. 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 develop positive steps towards promoting safety when on outings
- continue to develop planning and assessment in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework to assist in identifying next steps for children
- ensure children's records contain sufficient information to enable appropriate care to be given, in relation to culture and home language
- develop knowledge, understanding and systems for the recording of complaints in line with regulations
- review the records, policies and procedures to meet current guidance and regulators contact details, and ensure these are shared effectively with parents.

### **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):

- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of appropriate questioning and discussion techniques to extend children's learning (also applies to care)
- continue to develop assessment records to ensure purposeful information is recorded and that clear identification is made of children's individual progress and appropriate next steps in learning
- extend opportunities for children to use mathematical language, counting and calculating within daily activities.

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