



HERGA OPPORTUNITY PLAYGROUP

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509003
Inspection date	13 February 2007
Inspector	Kim Mundy
Setting Address	NORTHOLT ROAD COMMUNAL HALL, NORTHOLT ROAD, SOUTH HARROW, MIDDLESEX, HA2 0NR
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Registered person	The Committee of the Herga Opportunity 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?

Herga Opportunity Playgroup opened over 25 years ago. It is a committee run playgroup which is situated in the community centre in South Harrow in Middlesex. A maximum of 25 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. It is open each weekday from 09:30 to 12:00, term time only. An optional lunch club operates on Monday and Thursday from 12:00 to 13.20. All children share access to a secure outdoor area.

There are currently 27 children from three to under five years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for nursery education. Eight of the places are reserved for children with special educational needs who are referred by the Education department. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs eight staff, some of whom work part time. Of these, seven of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup is working towards Pre-school Learning Alliance accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and welfare is positively promoted by staff. The setting's thorough policies and procedures support the good practice in place, for example, for medicine administration and accident recording. Children are learning about the importance of keeping healthy during cooking activities and the daily routine. They are cared for in a clean and very welcoming environment.

Children enjoy relaxed and sociable snack times. Parents are required to provide fresh fruit and vegetables. There is a lunch club which operates on two days a week. Children sit and chat with staff whilst enjoying their packed lunches provided by their parents. Children are not able to help themselves to drinking water when they are thirsty because this is not made accessible to them.

Children enjoy fresh air and exercise. The playgroup garden provides plenty of room for children to confidently run around and develop an awareness of the space around them. They laugh and giggle as they participate in games using the parachute. Children learn new skills such as balancing on stilts and throwing and catching balls. Children are developing good hand and eye coordination, for example, as they do puzzles, post shapes and cut with scissors. Children are learning about the importance of being healthy through themes such as hair dressers and hospitals.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed enthusiastically by staff as they arrive. The play room is set up attractively with an interesting range of activities to capture the children's imagination, for example, the role-play area. There is a very good range of toys and resources to meet the needs of the children attending.

Overall, children are safe and secure on the premises because the comprehensive policies and procedures in place are followed by staff to promote their safety and welfare, for example, daily risk assessments to minimise possible hazards on the premises. Children practise regular fire drills, although the written fire records lack necessary detail, for example, the time taken to evacuate the premises, and fire fighting equipment has not been checked since November 2005. This impacts on children's safety in the event of a fire. Staff work directly with the children in the different areas of the playroom and therefore, they are well supervised at all times.

Children are safeguarded from abuse or neglect because staff have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities in child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All of the children currently attending are over three-years-old. They are offered the same learning opportunities whether or not they are in receipt of funding for early years education. Children develop close relationships with their individual key worker who is responsible for coordinating their care. Strong emphasis is placed on children's emotional well-being and as a result, they settle well at this group and develop confidence and self-esteem.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and they implement this effectively within the setting. Staff plan a well balanced curriculum to help children to make good progress in all six areas of learning. They observe and record the children's progress and identify the next steps for their individual learning. Overall, staff provide suitable support and challenges to help children to make progress and they are aware of the need to extend challenges as the children achieve. However, the planning for outdoor play is not sufficient because children do not have enough opportunities to engage in the six areas of learning outdoors. Good teaching methods are used such as open ended questioning and demonstrating new tasks. Staff are very kind and caring and therefore, children flourish in this nurturing environment. There is a strong commitment from staff to continuously improve the provision for early education.

Children are very happy and motivated to learn. Children are able to work as part of a group, take turns and share. They are confident speakers and they engage in conversations with each other and adults. Children listen attentively at story time and staff sometimes use puppets and props to provide further interest. This provides good support for children who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties/disabilities. Early writing is promoted and some children begin to write correctly formed letters and their name.

Children begin to count confidently and they are learning about shape and space as they fit puzzles together and construct with bricks. They have many good opportunities to sort objects, do simple addition and subtraction, and floating and sinking. However, they do not spend enough time weighing or exploring volume in the water play.

Children are exploring different textures as they use paint, glue, sand and play dough. They are learning about their local community through visits from the fire brigade. Children use magnifying glasses to observe mini-beasts and they enjoy investigating and exploring living things such as snails and butterflies. They plant and care for cress, coriander and sun flowers. Children enjoy music and movement as they dance with scarves, play musical instruments and explore songs, rhymes and rhythms.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are treated with equal concern and their individual needs are met very effectively by the staff. They are well-behaved, take turns and share, and show caring attitudes towards

staff and each other. Children are finding out about their own and other people's culture and beliefs as they celebrate different festivals such as Diwali and Eid. They have access to a good range of toys and resources which promotes their understanding of the world they live in, for example, books, dressing up clothes, puzzles and dolls. This means that children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals as they set individual targets to help children to make the best possible progress during their time at this playgroup. Staff are particularly knowledgeable about caring for children with learning difficulties/ disabilities. They attend on going training and have acquired specific skills such as Makaton sign language and Epi-pen administration.

Children benefit from the good relationships between staff and parents. Parents are encouraged to settle their children gradually until they are happy to be left. Consequently, this is a positive experience for them. Children have very good relationships with staff who are extremely kind and nurturing. As a result, children feel very safe and secure.

Partnerships with parents and carers in relation to nursery education is good. There is good information available to parents about the Foundation Stage of learning. Parents receive regular written feedback about their children's progress towards the stepping stones of the early learning goals. Parents speak very highly of this pre-school setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

This playgroup is well organised because managers have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and lead the staff team very efficiently. Rigorous recruitment procedures are in place and staff have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities. Children benefit greatly from the staff's enthusiasm and commitment to providing an interesting and caring learning environment. Staff training needs are identified at yearly appraisal meetings and they have good opportunities to attend on going training through the Local Authority.

The leadership and management in relation to nursery education is good. Managers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and they support staff to implement this very effectively within the playgroup. There are good systems in place for monitoring the quality of teaching as managers observe and work alongside the staff. Therefore, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff are extremely kind, keen and motivated. Children are well cared for and their individual needs are met. The required documentation is in place to support children's health, safety and well-being. They are having lots of fun as they learn through play. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the playgroup was required to: ensure there are effective procedures in place for checking that staff are of suitable health to work with children; and make available to parents a written statement that provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint. Rigorous recruitment procedures are in place to include a health questionnaire. The complaints procedure for parents has been updated to include the latest guidance. Therefore, children's care and welfare are promoted.

At the last nursery education inspection, the playgroup was required to: develop long and short term planning to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum is offered; develop assessment methods to clearly identify next steps for children's learning linked to the stepping stones; and to ensure effective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the nursery education offered. The staff have worked hard to develop the planning which now offers a well balanced curriculum in all six areas of learning. Assessments clearly identify the next steps for children's learning and they are linked to the stepping stones. Managers have put effective systems in to place to monitor the quality of teaching through staff appraisals and observation. Consequently, children are making good progress towards the stepping stones of the early learning goals.

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):

- ensure children can access drinking water independently at all times
- keep a clear written record of fire evacuation records and include all necessary details, and ensure fire fighting equipment is suitably checked.

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):

- plan the use of the outdoor play area to include the six areas of learning
- provide more opportunities for children to weigh, and to explore volume through water play.

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