

# Hillview Under 5's Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	303469
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Patricia Birkenhead
<b>Setting Address</b>	Beechwood Avenue, Beechwood, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 3HB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01928 714666
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Hillview Under Fives 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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hillview Under 5's Pre-School Playgroup is run by a voluntary management committee. It opened in 1981 and operates from the Community Room within Hillview County Primary School, which is situated in Runcorn, Cheshire. A maximum of 22 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11:30, during term time only. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 25 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 22 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the surrounding area. The pre-school can provide support for children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language, although there are none of these children currently on roll.

The pre-school employs a manager and deputy manager, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. In addition, another member of staff, who is unqualified, is employed on a temporary basis. The Halton Early Years Foundation Stage consultant supports the setting.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is, in the main, promoted well within the setting due to the appropriate practices and procedures the staff follow. Children know that washing their hands at certain times of the day keeps them clean and 'gets rid of germs, which make them poorly'. The cleaning rotas on display highlight the different areas within the setting for the staff to check and clean during the session. The detailed sickness policy and the informative poster on display makes parents aware of the necessary exclusion periods for illness. Therefore, children are appropriately protected from the risk of infection. The consistent systems for the recording of accidents and medication are acknowledged by parents, who sign against the entries made. The good proportion of staff qualified in first aid ensures that children's minor accidents and injuries are treated effectively.

All children experience worthwhile opportunities to develop their physical skills daily. For example, they confidently climb and develop their balancing skills when using the climbing frame and rope ladder. They negotiate space in the outdoor area when they use the wheeled toys and learn to control their movements well to avoid collision with others. They develop their finer physical skills as they manipulate the play dough and use one-handed tools, such as the scissors and spatulas. The children positively extend their learning about the effects that physical exercise has on their overall well-being through the planned activities, such as the sports day.

Children receive an appropriate choice of healthy drinks throughout their stay, which take into account their individual dietary requirements. Children confidently help themselves regularly to the drinking water from the dispenser, therefore, promoting their self-help skills, and on occasions they pour drinks for others at snack time. Some aspects of healthy eating are incorporated into the snack provision, such as the varied fruits that they examine and discuss. However, at other times children can choose from a variety of biscuits, or are served hot dogs, which compromises their understanding of healthy eating. Children sit in smaller groups at snack time to promote a socially interactive time, however, the lack of organisation sometimes proves disruptive.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for within a welcoming environment, where staff greet them at the door. They have access to a wide range of play materials and equipment, which are set out prior to their arrival. Children assist in painting the murals on the walls, for example, the number caterpillar, which contributes to the children's sense of belonging. Appropriate use is made of the space available because screens are used to separate the different areas, which were created for children to access independently, making decisions about their play and activities.

Children are cared for within a generally safe environment because the staff take positive steps to minimise risks to the children. For example, the setting is secure, hazardous materials are stored in locked cupboards and safety mats surround the climbing frame. However, the ceiling is currently in need of repair, which is the responsibility of the property owner. Children learn about what is dangerous and how to keep themselves safe because the staff clearly explain the consequences of their actions, particularly when playing on the climbing frame. They learn

about fire safety as they practise the procedures for emergency evacuation termly, which are appropriately documented.

Children's welfare is not fully safeguarded. The staff outline their positive understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse. However, the written policy does not reflect the necessary procedures should an allegation be made against a member of staff, or the correct procedures for the referral of child protection concerns necessary to further safeguard children.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, settle well within the day care environment and confidently separate from their parents on arrival. They quickly become involved in the play and activities, selecting for themselves what they want to play with from the wide range available. They benefit from the suitable balance of adult-led and child-initiated experiences, which, in the main, support and extend their learning and enjoyment. The room is appropriately organised to provide different areas of learning, which include creative, physical, construction, role-play and the library. This enables children to make choices about their areas of play, which they move between independently. Staff interact positively with the children to extend and support their learning in most areas.

Children are familiar with the routine followed and are heard telling others 'we have to go into the library for the register', once all the children have arrived. The routines followed provide structure to the children's stay, and include free play, planned creative activities and group times. The staff have not attended the 'Birth to three matters' training and therefore, the associated areas of learning are currently not incorporated into the planning of activities.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All staff are actively involved in the planning of a broad and balanced curriculum of activities, which reflect all areas of learning and links to the stepping stones. Staff have a sufficient knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, however, this is not supported by attending additional training to further extend their understanding of how children learn. At times, they use their questioning skills to positively promote children's thinking. The staff generally monitor the children's developmental progress well by completing the Early Years Foundation Stage transition documents at regular intervals, which they pass to school when the children leave. The staff complete regular observations during activities and play using the 'participation sheets'. Information recorded reflects the children's achievements and areas where 'more practice is needed'. This information assists in the completion of the children's assessment records and evaluations in place, which contribute to the next steps in children's learning.

Children develop positive relationships with one another and adults. They communicate confidently as they engage in conversation with the adults and other children. For example, they anticipate the next stage in the familiar story of the 'Hungry caterpillar', which is read to them when attending church. Children volunteer information as they explain to the inspector that the blue tap in the role play area is the cold water and the red tap is the hot water. They show a positive interest in books as they sit together and pretend to read a story from a book they have chosen or ask staff to read to them. Children have limited opportunities to make marks independently in order to develop their writing skills, because writing materials are not freely accessible. They are encouraged to write their names in the Easter cards they make,

which some children achieve confidently, whilst others join the dots to encourage their learning. Some children sound out the letters that make up their name correctly, which assists them in recognising their name cards as part of the self-registration scheme.

Children are, in the main, developing a positive understanding of mathematics. For example, a group of children count to ten spontaneously and without prompting, when playing in the role play area. They use their fingers to count to 10, which represents the number of items the 'Hungry caterpillar' eats when listening to the story. They refer to the 'big and small' as they compare the size of the collage pieces which are used to make their Easter cards. Children recreate number patterns well using cards and small coloured blocks, counting the number of blocks it takes and naming the number created. However, spontaneous every day opportunities to enhance children's understanding of mathematics are not built on by the staff.

Children are involved in activities to enable them to explore and investigate using their senses generally through planned activities. For example, they use the binoculars, which staff position in the window, to explore the animals they can see outside, and use the digital camera to take photographs of each other. Some children are demonstrating increasing skill when using the laptop; they confidently use it to draw pictures and write their name, rectifying errors they make with little intervention from staff. Others are supported by staff in developing these skills. Children visit places of interest, such as the local church, as part of the Easter theme to promote their understanding of the wider world and beliefs.

Children enjoy the role play area, which is used for different purposes, such as a shop or a home corner, to sufficiently promote their imagination. Children enjoy dressing up and freely select from the good range of costumes available, such as the wizard, the pumpkin and the fairy. Children engage in a positive range of creative activities daily using various materials, for example, when creating Easter nests, Easter cards and painting using sponge shapes. However, staff over-direct the children during the creative activities planned, which results in children being unable to express themselves freely.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing positive relationships with staff and each other and are valued as individuals. Information recorded initially on the children's records form contributes to the staff getting to know the children, therefore, enabling them to provide appropriate and consistent care. Children are developing a positive understanding of the wider world through the celebration of festivals and times of the year. For example, they make cards and visit the local church when celebrating Easter. Children have access to varied resources, which reflect positive images of culture, race and disability. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff demonstrate, through discussion and the policy in place, a sufficient understanding of how to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. They work with the area Special Educational Needs coordinator (SENCO), and staff within the setting have attended the necessary training. However, no children with learning difficulties or disabilities are currently cared for.

Children behave well because the staff use appropriate methods for the management of their behaviour. Children are responsive to staff direction for tidying toys away, taking turns and sharing resources when reminded. Minor disagreements are managed well and staff approach

situations calmly to reach a successful conclusion. Children learn to respect each other as they apologise to those affected by their behaviour and give each other a hug. As a result, children learn to play cooperatively. Children's good behaviour and achievements are recognised through stickers that they receive and through regular, verbal praise. Therefore, this contributes to the development of children's confidence and successfully fosters their self-esteem.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The information leaflet they initially receive makes them aware of some aspects of the pre-school setting, albeit brief. They are welcomed into the setting when delivering and collecting their children. The display of information for parents to read includes the policies, activities planned and the 'activities at home', which outlines ways in which parents can contribute to the children's learning. However, not all parents are aware of the details displayed and as a result, not many have read them. Parents and carers receive verbal feedback on collection of their child, informing them of their well-being. They are invited to attend the mini-graduation ceremony where children dress up in a cap and gown and receive a certificate when leaving to go to school. They can request to see their child's developmental records at any time within the pre-school, however, there is no formal system for sharing this information with them. Parents are happy with the care their children receive and are confident to approach the staff to discuss any aspect of the children's care and development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The ratio of staff to children is supported by the students and temporary staff that were appointed due to recent changes in the staff team. This results in a good number of adults to support children in their learning. Staff complete an induction period and have access to the written policies, which enables them to be familiar with pre-school practices and procedures. Systems for the clearance of students and committee members are not fully implemented. As a result, the newly appointed committee members have not completed the necessary clearance procedure through Ofsted. In addition, evidence of clearance for some students is not available, resulting in children being left unsupervised for short periods with unsuitable persons during activities. These issues constitute a breach in regulations.

The written policies and procedures, in the main, contain very detailed information relating to the pre-school practices, with minimal omission. All policies are dated, positively linked to the National Standards and regularly updated, taking into account the recent changes in regulation. All legally required documentation that contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being are organised well.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager and staff are clear about their individual roles and those of the committee members, who appropriately support the staff team. The session plans include the deployment of the staff during activities to support children in their learning. The manager values the support that the pre-school receive from the early years consultant who visits the setting monthly to monitor the education provision. However, there are no systems in place for formal appraisals of the manager and staff and as a result, additional training to extend their knowledge and skills is minimal.

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

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

During the last care inspection the provider was requested to give attention to certain aspects of the policies in place, which included: the child protection policy regarding allegations against staff; the policy for the administration of medication; and the complaints procedure. Since the last inspection, policies have been updated to include the information outlined. However, the child protection policy does not clearly outline the procedures to be followed should allegations be made against staff. As a result of the changes made to the policies in place, parents who read them are, in the main, familiar with practices followed, ensuring the children's welfare is maintained.

During the last nursery education inspection, the provider was requested to develop ways to further improve opportunities for the children to consolidate their learning by using equipment and resources effectively and by working at their own pace, and to reinforce the staff's understanding of how children learn. This has been achieved through the organisation of the room. As a result, children independently select from play materials accessible, which contributes to the children's learning and enjoyment and assists the staff in further developing their awareness of how children learn.

### **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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **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 receive a range of healthy snacks
- ensure the child protection policy reflects the correct procedures to be followed for the referral of suspected child abuse, and in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff
- develop the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework in the planning of activities
- develop a system to ensure that all committee members complete the necessary clearance procedure through Ofsted, and ensure that any person who has not been vetted is never left alone with children.

## **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):

- extend opportunities within the setting to enable children to practise writing skills independently
- ensure children are provided with greater opportunities to express themselves freely during creative activities
- develop opportunities for children to extend their understanding of mathematics in everyday situations
- review procedures in place to make sure all parents are made aware of the children's activities, the Foundation Stage curriculum and the children's developmental progress records.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)