

# The Cherry Hinton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 221863

**Inspection date** 07 June 2007

**Inspector** Emma Bright

**Setting Address** Cherry Hinton Junior School, Fulbourn Old Drift, Cambridge,  
Cambridgeshire, CB1 9ND

**Telephone number** 01223 508152 Mob 07778 300323

**E-mail**

**Registered person** The Cherry 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](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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Cherry Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the playgroup. It opened in 1972 and operates from the community wing of Cherry Hinton Community Junior School in Cherry Hinton, Cambridge. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open five days a week from 09:15 to 12:15 with a lunch club from 12:15 until 12:45, during school term times. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 38 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports children who have English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs five staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is currently working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is outstanding.

All children learn about leading a very healthy lifestyle through everyday, practical experiences which ensures they receive plenty of exercise to promote their growth and development. Children move independently between indoors and outdoors throughout the session, accessing the wide range of activities that develop their growing physical skills. For example, they speed along on scooters and tricycles with confidence and competently manoeuvre bigger 'vehicles' round obstacles. Children develop their small muscular skills with an excellent range of tools and utensils; they use small hammers and nails at the wood work bench, build complex structures from 'octagons' and use whisks in cooking activities. Children effectively learn about personal hygiene through regular routines such as washing their hands before eating and cooking activities; they explain that "you have to wash your hands because they are dirty".

Children thrive because they are very well cared for if they become unwell or in the event of an accident because clear information is gathered from parents and excellent records are in place to make sure that appropriate care is given. Accurate details of children's allergies and medical needs are recorded and all practitioners are aware so that they can act swiftly in an emergency. In addition all practitioners hold first aid certificates. Thorough recording systems ensure that parents are informed of any accidents their child sustains whilst at the setting.

Children help themselves to a very good selection of healthy snacks; they enthusiastically tuck in to pieces of pear, apple, and banana. They are beginning to make connections about healthy food being 'good for you'; they know that "milk comes from cows and makes your bones strong" and they discuss with practitioners their favourite healthy choices. Children thoroughly enjoy the social aspect with their peers and adults during snack time, which is provided on a 'rolling' basis so that they can choose when they want to eat. This allows them to continue their activities and enhances the gentle flow of the session. Children help themselves to water from individual water bottles whenever they need it so that they are well-hydrated.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety is paramount within the setting. They are very well protected and kept safe from harm as all practitioners have an excellent understanding of their role in child protection. They regularly access training to ensure their knowledge is up to date and in line with local procedures, which means that children's welfare is fully safeguarded. Parents are well informed about the setting's responsibilities through a clear and detailed policy, which is included in the parents' prospectus.

Children learn and play in a clean, bright and well-maintained building; great emphasis is given to making sure that the environment is welcoming for children and their families. For example, children's art work is beautifully displayed and photographs of the children at play line the walls; they readily point out who they are and carefully explain to visitors who their teachers are. This significantly enhances their sense of belonging and security. Resources have been carefully chosen to support children's play and these are cleaned and checked regularly to ensure that they remain absolutely safe for children to use. All children have access to an extensive range of good quality, safe equipment; they move freely between indoors and outdoors, selecting resources to support and develop their play. This means children engage

in purposeful activity and safely choose items themselves which significantly enhances their independence.

Children's safety is greatly enhanced by very good security procedures to restrict access to the setting and prevent them from leaving the premises unaccompanied. Practitioners are particularly vigilant in their supervision of children and consistently check that sufficient adults are present, both indoor and outdoors. Children learn about keeping safe as practitioners provide simple, but clear explanations to help them think about why, for example, they should be careful at the water tray; children know that this is because "It might splash and get in someone's eyes". In addition, practitioners carefully assess and supervise activities, allowing children to take acceptable risks in a safe environment. This helps children develop their understanding of hazards and to take responsibility for themselves.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's experiences are significantly enhanced by the skilful interaction of practitioners who clearly enjoy working with them and use their excellent understanding of child development to support children's learning. The team use the 'Birth to three matters' framework as a reference tool to assess the progress of younger children and to create an environment where they thrive. Children acquire new knowledge and skills because practitioners gently encourage them to participate in activities, using excellent questioning skills to help children think and develop their language.

All children arrive happy and with eager anticipation at the setting. They relish their time in the highly stimulating and extremely well resourced environment, which puts them first. Children play effectively on their own or with others and form strong friendships with their peers. Close and caring relationships throughout the setting increase children's sense of trust and help them to develop a strong sense of self. Children eagerly explore and demonstrate great curiosity and fascination in the snails they find. They kneel on the ground to get closer and excitedly announce "Oh look! He's wagging his head". Children seek out magnifying glasses and binoculars which they use in order to observe more closely. When the snails finally slide away they decide that the snail is "going home to see his Mum and Dad".

Children are highly independent and confident, readily directing their own learning; they busy themselves, selecting additional resources to support their play from the superb range available to them. Children play a dynamic part in the setting; they actively pursue their own interests and are highly motivated by the rich learning experiences on offer. For example, children particularly enjoy manipulating play dough, and they competently push it through the tube and are fascinated with the end result, commenting that "it comes out like worms!"

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children benefit significantly from the practitioners' excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. Practitioners are perceptive to children's interests and make effective use of questions to challenge their thinking and language skills. Children respond positively to this challenge and enjoy demonstrating what they know with great enthusiasm. Exceptional planning for children's play and learning ensures that there is always something new to capture their imagination. A flexible approach to this planning means that an excellent balance between adult- and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Highly effective systems to observe monitor and

record children's achievements ensure that practitioners build on what children already know and they plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning. As a result children are making outstanding progress towards the early learning goals.

Children explore their creativity in the excellent range of art and craft activities; they thoroughly enjoying smearing paint onto cling film attached to the table, laying paper on top and remarking "I put different colours in and it turned into a star!" A strong emphasis is placed on developing children's self-expression; they freely produce excellent drawings, pictures and models to represent their ideas. Children express their imagination and make up their own games as they pretend to be 'Dora the Explorer' or lions, hiding under the table roaring. Children confidently sing simple songs from memory and enjoy making up new words to well-known songs in exuberant singing sessions.

Children's behaviour is exemplary; they learn from practitioners' good example saying please and thank you and demonstrate awareness of the needs of others. This promotes harmony and means that children play in a warm and secure atmosphere. Children are highly independent and the free-flow of stimulating activities, both indoor and outdoors enables them to share responsibility for their learning. Children are extremely confident communicators; they initiate conversations with other adults and readily share their ideas and stories. For example, some children confidently tell simple jokes and make up stories such as "A girl climbed up the ladder and swung and swung, but it was safe because she climbed up really slowly". Children's early writing skills are developing extremely well as they use marks readily to represent their ideas. They competently dictate captions to their pictures, such as "This is a nice rainbow across the sky". Children take delight in listening to stories, joining in eagerly to say what may happen next. Their continuing interest in books is further encouraged through a library system which allows children to take books home to share with their parents.

Children confidently use numbers in a meaningful context in their play; they know that spiders have eight legs and competently demonstrate on their fingers how old they are. Children use mathematical language to describe volume and size as they fill up their containers with water or cut play dough into 'long' and 'short' pieces. Children demonstrate an awareness of time asking "Is there time to play another game?" and develop mathematical ideas to solve problems. For example, they carefully assemble cogs and wheels on to a board, lining them up, which enables them all to rotate. Children competently use everyday technology in their play, such as keyboards, metal detectors and a digital camera. They enjoy dressing up as lions and monkeys and they snap pictures of each other, taking it in turns to pose with their 'paws' in the air!

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from the setting's strong emphasis of working with parents and carers. Thorough settling in procedures that are based around their individual needs help to support children in the transition between home and the setting. For example, practitioners complete home visits before children start and this enables them to gather good information to be used as starting points for care, teaching and learning. Parents receive clear and detailed information about the setting so they know about activities and events and they have daily opportunities to discuss their child with practitioners. This helps children to settle quickly and ensures their individual needs continue to be very well met. All policies and procedures are in place to share information with parents and carers.

Practitioners are sensitive to children's needs and consistently interact with them at a very high level to extend their learning and play; they listen to children's comments and ideas, treating what children say with respect. This contributes significantly to the children's sense of belonging and continuously develops their confidence and self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through a range of very well planned activities. Children demonstrate care for each other and tenderly 'read' stories to the baby of a parent helper. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from staff's experience and caring support, which enables them to participate at their own pace. Practitioners actively work with parents, carers and other agencies to support the children's needs and this ensures that they are fully included in the life of the setting.

Children's behaviour is exceptional. They interact confidently with adults and their peers, learning to consider the needs of others and to work together co-operatively, for example, as they help each other to tidy up. Practitioners set clear boundaries and have high expectations for all children in the setting, which helps them to learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. For example, they use a sand timer and understand that this is to help them know when it is someone else's turn. Practitioners use positive language to reinforce the rules of the setting and as a result children work harmoniously together.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is outstanding. Practitioners actively seek parents' views about their child's needs, interests and achievements before the child starts, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. This contributes significantly to children's well-being in the setting. Children's records are available to parents on a regular basis and they meet regularly with their child's key worker to ensure that they know how their child is progressing and developing. Practitioners are keen to involve parents in their children's learning. They have set up a book lending scheme and provide parents with 'activities at home' sheets. These inform parents of their current topics and suggests activities that they could enjoy at home with their children to support their learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Practitioners work exceptionally well together as a cohesive team and demonstrate great enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that stimulates and challenges children of all ages. Policies, records and procedures are clear and comprehensive, clearly underpinning the outstanding practice in promoting positive outcomes for children. Practitioner's knowledge and understanding of these documents clearly contributes to their implementation to ensure that children are safe and well cared for. There is a high emphasis on professional development and practitioners regularly attend a range of training opportunities. As a result children benefit from practices which are in line with current ideas and legislation.

Children benefit from an exceptionally well prepared environment that promotes positive outcomes for all children and enables them to make decisions and pursue their own interests. This contributes significantly to their enjoyment at the setting. Children are extremely happy and confident because practitioners develop warm and caring relationships with them. For example, an effective key worker system ensures that all children's needs are clearly known and met. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that practitioners are suitable and have appropriate skills and knowledge to work with children.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is outstanding. The Lead Practitioner manages the provision exceptionally well and has a clear vision of high quality childcare and education. She has a clear understanding of her role in monitoring and evaluating practice throughout the setting, which ensures that children benefit from the outstanding provision. All practitioners demonstrate a real commitment to continuously developing the setting's practice to ensure that all children have access to high quality learning experiences. Overall children's needs are met.

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

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to amend the child protection policy. The policy is fully updated and includes the appropriate procedure which ensures children's welfare.

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider agreed to develop the provision for older children, and the system of assessment. Effective strategies have been implemented to ensure children are challenged and their assessment records have been fully developed so that parents regularly contribute and this is clearly reflected in this report.

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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)