

Holy Trinity Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218163
Inspection date	16 July 2007
Inspector	Jacqueline Mason
Setting Address	Holy Trinity Community Centre, London Road, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 1LQ
Telephone number	01782 616367
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Registered person	Holy Trinity Playgroup Committee
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Holy Trinity Playgroup opened in 1970. It operates from two rooms on the first floor of the community centre attached to Holy Trinity Church close to Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre. The group has use of the centre's kitchen and toilets. There is an outdoor area available for outdoor play. The playgroup serves the local area and the wider community.

There are currently 23 children from two to four years on roll. Of these, nine children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during school term times. Sessions are from 09:45 until 13:15.

A total of six staff work with the children. Of these over half have appropriate early years qualifications to level two or three. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's dietary needs are mostly met by parents and carers as they provide lunch for their children. Lunch boxes are stored adequately. Snacks are provided by the setting and are nutritious. Fresh fruit is promoted to help children develop healthy habits with regard to eating. Special dietary needs can be met in agreement with parents and carers and individual preferences are respected. Fresh drinking water is available at all times. In addition, children are offered fresh milk and water at snack time.

Effective procedures are in place for sick children to ensure that the best interests of all children are met. Risks of cross-infection are managed adequately. For example, effective nappy changing procedures are in place that help to prevent the spread of infection. Children are helped to recognise the importance of good personal hygiene and this is promoted through everyday routines such as all children using disposable 'baby wipes' to wipe their hands before snack time, and through children being reminded to wash their hands after toileting.

The provision for physical development is satisfactory. Although children are not provided with daily opportunities to play outdoors, staff pay good attention to ensuring that children have access to active physical play each day. A good range of equipment, such as climbing frames, trampolines and wheeled toys, is provided.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

There are satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that children can play safely indoors. Heating radiators are covered and windows are out of the reach of children. However, children's safety is compromised because insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that water play is not sited alongside electrical sockets and some sockets that are not in use are not covered. Emergency evacuation procedures are effective. Children are protected in the event of needing to evacuate the premises in an emergency because evacuation practices take place regularly and staff know what to do to keep children safe.

Children are cared for in an environment that is welcoming to parents, carers and children. The rooms are set out before children arrive with a varied range of toys and equipment and this helps children to be comfortable and settled. Children's art work is displayed and this helps them to develop a sense of belonging. It is not possible for children to access stored toys independently but they are encouraged to choose independently from the toys selected by adults each day. Toys, equipment and furniture are clean, safe and suitable for the age range of the children attending.

Children are protected because staff have a satisfactory awareness of their roles and responsibilities in the protection of children. They are aware of some of the signs and symptoms of abuse and are confident to report concerns. Existing injuries are recorded. The designated member of staff who takes responsibility for child protection concerns has attended relevant training so that she is able to respond appropriately to concerns to ensure that the welfare of children is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

A consistent routine is followed and this helps children to develop a sense of belonging and self-confidence. Children are familiar with routines, such as when a member of staff shakes the tambourine they know to stop what they are doing. Staff provide a range of toys and activities to promote all areas of development and children have free access to the activities provided. This helps them to develop confidence to work independently in the environment. Children are encouraged to persist with activities of their choosing, such as when playing with the train set they are helped to build, and complete, a track. However, developmental outcomes for children under the age of three years could be improved by implementing a framework in line with 'Birth to three matters'. This would ensure that children's needs are met and that activities are appropriate.

Staff show a good interest in what the children say and do. They engage children in conversation and play with children to help them be engaged in the activity they have chosen. For example, when children are playing in the home corner they are encouraged to talk about the play food and play imaginatively.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate and children are not making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff do not have an adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage and because of this are not able to implement it effectively. Although activity planning takes into account the six areas of learning, staff do not take into consideration children's individual stages of development when carrying out short-term planning. This results in activities not meeting children's individual educational needs, with some activities being too advanced for some children and not challenging enough for others. Children quickly lose interest in adult-led activities because there is no focus to them. Because of staff's lack of knowledge, adult-led activities lack focus. They are not linked to the stepping stones and staff are not clear about what the children are intended to learn.

Staff do not know children's starting points when they become eligible for funding because they do not carry out initial assessments. Although there is a system in place for observing and recording children's developmental progress this is not routinely implemented. Some children do not have formal observations carried out on them for some months. As a result, it is not possible to plan the next steps in children's learning and ensure that they are making progress.

Staff are building good relationships with the children and children are confident to go to them for conversation and support, such as when they need help putting on an apron in order to take part in a painting activity. Children separate readily from their main carer. They participate well in large groups and enjoy listening to stories. They talk readily about the illustrations and are developing a good vocabulary based on their own experiences and adult input. For example, during the topic of 'under the sea' children have learned the names of sea creatures such as octopus, crab and starfish. Children are beginning to understand that print carries meaning. They enjoy looking at the names of the days of the week when completing the date and weather chart as part of a large group. However, they have few opportunities to see their written name and are not encouraged to develop writing skills. Children are not encouraged to attempt to write their name on their art work. Although there is a table put out each day for drawing and writing activities children are not able to experience writing for different purposes, such as

notepads in the home corner. Activities to help children learn about letters and initial sounds are limited.

Children show an interest in numbers and counting and are encouraged to count in everyday play and routine situations. Children mostly count accurately up to 10 but have no opportunities to compare groups of objects to recognise when they have the same number. They show little awareness of shape. However, children do show an awareness of colour and are able to identify different colours in the environment. They enjoy exploring what happens when two colours are mixed together. Creative activities are enjoyed by children. However, art and craft activities are always led by adults and because of this children are not developing individual creativity.

Children are learning about the natural world and are enjoying the current topic. An awareness of their own and other cultures and beliefs is developing. However, children have limited opportunities to learn about everyday technology such as computers and telephones. Staff do not provide good learning opportunities, such as the provision of a telephone in the role play area. Children enjoy role play, based on their own experiences and adult input. Physical skills are developing well because there is daily opportunity for children to take part in active physical play. In addition, children are developing hand to eye coordination because activities are provided to promote this area of their physical development. For example, children are able to thread using commercially bought thread and buttons and are able to use a hole-punch at the drawing table.

Activities are not evaluated to judge the impact that they have had on children's learning. Staff do not record whether children have found the activity challenging or too simple nor if they have adapted the activity to help less able children fully participate. Despite this, staff do work well with the children and provide an environment that is organised to help children become self-sufficient.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Positive images of culture, disability and gender are promoted satisfactorily throughout the setting to help children learn about the world around them and develop respectful attitudes to others. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language and label furniture, such as chairs, with the word in English and other languages to help children and families develop a sense of belonging. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to help ensure that the individual needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met and that they are fully included in all aspects of the provision.

Behaviour management strategies are satisfactory. Unwanted behaviour is managed appropriately to help children learn right from wrong and play well together. Good behaviour is valued and encouraged and staff use reward stickers to help children to want to behave well. Children are helped to share and take turns and through this children are learning to respect the needs of others.

Staff have friendly and trusting relationships with parents and carers. Although parents are not currently actively involved in the setting, such as through being involved in the committee, information is shared to keep parents and carers informed about the provision, for example, through the provision of regular letters. They are encouraged to help out in the setting if they

wish to do. Parents and carers are encouraged to share what they know about their child in order that individual needs can be met and continuity of care promoted.

Partnerships with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education are satisfactory. There are arrangements in place to share curriculum planning with them and there are some procedures to help them be involved in their children's learning. Arrangements to keep parents and carers informed about their children's progress along the stepping stones are being considered. Parents and carers are welcome to speak to their child's key worker at any time.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a consistent staff who know them well. However, recruitment and selection procedures are not robust. Insufficient attention is paid to ensuring staff are suitable to work with children and this has the potential to put children at risk of harm. Although the committee are not clear about their roles and responsibilities there are clear arrangements identified to address this to help ensure that the setting is effective in its care and education of young children.

Children have good adult support to help them be settled and confident. A good ratio of adults to children is maintained and staff spend most of their time working directly with the children. A key worker system is currently being developed to help ensure that each child has a named person to take responsibility for co-ordinating their individual care and development needs. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Registration systems are effective to ensure that an accurate record is maintained of the hours of staff and children's attendance. Documentation relating to children and staff is stored securely to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. All necessary documentation, necessary for the safe and efficient running of the setting, is in place. Policies and procedures are available to parents and carers to help them make informed choices about their children's care.

The leadership and management is inadequate. The setting does not have effective arrangements in place to assess its own strengths and weaknesses. Staff are enthusiastic about improving their childcare qualifications but do not follow this up with continuing development of their childcare and education skills and knowledge, such as their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning. There are no systems in place to monitor the nursery education provision and as a result, children are not making good progress towards the early learning goals. Despite this, key personnel are committed to improvement. They are aware of what needs improving and are beginning to put systems into place to address the weaknesses of the setting.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection staff were required to develop their knowledge of the current guidance for child protection and to include staff attendance in the daily register.

The records for staff attendance have been improved. The hours of staff attendance are now recorded and this gives a clear indication of which staff are present at any time. The playgroup supervisor has attended both level one and level two training in child protection to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded at all times.

NURSERY EDUCATION

At the last inspection for nursery education staff were required to further develop their knowledge of planning and assessment to ensure all six areas of learning are covered; to address gaps in the educational programme; improve the monitoring and evaluation of the provision of nursery education and to provide sufficient information to parents with regard to their children's progress towards the early learning goals.

Since the last inspection there have been numerous changes of leadership resulting in detrimental effects to the quality of the nursery education. Management has now stabilised. It is planned for staff to receive training in nursery education to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to be able to put together a balanced curriculum that helps children make progress in all areas of learning. There are plans currently being developed to provide parents and carers with information about the Foundation Stage and to keep them informed about their children's progress. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the nursery education has also been raised as an area for improvement at this inspection.

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 that safety risks to children are minimised with regard to electrical sockets
- improve outcomes for children under the age of three years by implementing a framework in line with 'Birth to three matters'
- improve knowledge and understanding of the registered person (the committee) with regard to their roles and responsibilities, such as the recruitment of staff.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage

- improve planning to help ensure that activities provide challenge and meet children's individual levels of understanding
- evaluate activities to ensure that they are meeting children's individual learning needs and are identifying the next steps in children's learning
- put in place procedures to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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