

Hollins Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	316853
Inspection date	05 June 2007
Inspector	Christine Marsh
Setting Address	Hollins Community Centre, Hollins Lane, Bury, Lancashire, BL9 8AY
Telephone number	0402 213 960 and 07702 213 960
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Registered person	Hollins Pre-School 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hollins Pre-School Playgroup has been established since 1972. It is run by the Hollins Pre-School Playgroup Committee and operates from the community centre in the semi-rural area of Hollins, Bury. Hollins Community Centre is a shared multi purpose hall, the premises are used by other community groups outside the hours the playgroup operates.

A maximum of 34 children aged between two and five years may attend at any one time. The pre-school playgroup operates sessions from 09.00 to 11.30 and 13.45 to 15.45 Monday to Friday during school term times. The group currently uses the main hall and the small adjacent room. There is a small enclosed area for outdoor play. There are currently 73 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for early education. Most of the children who attend live in the local area.

The pre-school playgroup employs 12 members of staff who work on a part-time basis. Of these, four staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification. The playgroup has links with the early years team in Bury.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean environment by staff who promote appropriate hygiene practices. For example, children are seen washing their hands when they are messy with paint. They explain that they need to wash the paint off so that they will be clean again. Children are sent to wash their hands before they have their snack. Children go to wash their hands after they have been to the toilet without staff needing to remind them to do so. Children show they are learning good health and hygiene practices. Staff have knowledge of first aid and are able to care for children in the event of minor accidents.

At snack times children are given fresh fruit, a biscuit and a drink. However, fresh drinking water is not continually available. This means that children are not kept refreshed throughout the session. Parents are informed which fruits children will be given each week, including a more unusual fruit, such as melon or kiwi. This helps to introduce children to a wider range of fruits as part of a nutritious diet.

Physical play takes place in the hall and outside. Exciting child sized gym equipment is seen in use by children. They are developing their large motor skills as they use cross-trainers, an exercise bike, and a treadmill. These mini versions of gym equipment adults use, are extremely popular with the children, who enjoy vigorous exercise and develop control of their bodies.

Indoors children develop their fine motor skills by pouring sand from one container to another and playing in the water tray. They also play with construction materials and use glue spreaders and scissors.

Children are able to play outside in a small secure area. They are seen peddling happily around the space on bikes developing their co-ordination skills as they manoeuvre around each other and equipment, such as slides. In the summer term the pre-school children go to the local 'ball zone'. This is an enclosed area for ball games on a soft surface. At the ball zone children play games with hoops and balls, as well as parachute games organised by staff. These games involve children in enjoyable physical activity which contributes to a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff create a safe, secure and welcoming environment. They work well within the constraints of the multi-user centre. Staff are on the door at arrival and departure times. Staff register children in the main hall during sessions as part of a carpet session. Staff are always aware of how many children are on the premises. This helps to keep children safe.

The setting is equipped with a large range of toys and equipment that is in good condition. For example, there are wooden painted shapes on magnets to use with boards, musical instruments, construction materials and books. The large hall is divided into areas including role play, carpet games, messy activities, table activities and a book area. Lengths of thin fabric in bright colours hang over some windows and coloured fish shapes, on clear plastic, decorate another area. These, together with children's own work, create an attractive environment for children to play in. The carpet is frayed in places in the small room. Some of these are covered by tape to prevent loose edges, but others are not suitably covered, which could cause children

to trip up. Staff are vigilant in supervising children. For example, when children climb steps or the coat pegs in the small room, they are quickly reminded to get down.

Doors are kept locked and staff only let children go with known parents and carers. Emergency evacuation procedures are undertaken regularly. Staff have clearly defined roles and different exits are used so that children are familiar with the procedure, which helps to keep them safe. Children learn about road safety through play with 'stop signs' and role play where children take on the roles of lollipop person, car driver and child crossing at the zebra crossing. Photographs show children enjoying this play.

Staff are aware of procedures relating to child protection. These are well documented in their policies. This promotes children's welfare and protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally settled in their setting. They show familiarity with the daily routines, which helps them feel secure. For example, a child explains that they will be having snack time after they have washed their hands, then they will be playing, 'That's what we always do' he says confidently. Children are engaged in a range of activities suitable to their play and development needs, and they interact positively with the staff and other children. Younger children enjoy being read 'pop up' books. They are seen looking at a jungle book with animals, such as a crocodile, in it. They join in songs, such as 'Row, row, row your boat' and scream loudly at the appropriate point.

Staff have a sound understanding of young children's needs and this is used to plan first hand experiences. However, staff do not currently use the 'Birth to three matters' framework, or a similar framework for very young children, to record children's learning and to share children's achievements with parents and carers.

Children's own work is central to the displays. Painted hand prints and foot prints are displayed at child eye height on one wall. Several children are seen looking intently at these, looking for their individual hand print and foot print. Children cut out pictures of food and help staff to stick these on to a wall display as part of the current topic on healthy eating.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Practitioners have a satisfactory knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and training is planned to increase their knowledge further. Children make sound progress towards the early learning goals. They enjoy their time at the pre-school playgroup and their personal, social and emotional development is promoted through staff supporting children according to their developmental needs. The stimulating activities and experiences provided for the children cover the six areas of learning using a topic based approach. Staff observe and assess children, but they do not always play alongside them as they are sometimes involved in setting up activities or preparing displays. This means that opportunities to extend children's learning are sometimes missed. Although long, medium and short term planning is undertaken by the staff teams, short term planning does not currently build on the gaps in individual children's knowledge, which means that their learning is not fully supported.

Nursery aged children leave their parents happily and choose activities to play with at the beginning of the session. Two special songs are sung at register time that help to reinforce the idea that all children and adults are each others friends. These songs are also sung at special occasions when parents and carers attend. Adults support children in being kind to one another by talking issues through with children as they arise.

Children regularly enjoy singing action songs. They sing 'Ten in a bed' and count how many teddy bears are left each time one has fallen out. Children enjoy using the small soft toys in conjunction with this song. Stories are read on a regular basis. Children are seen enjoying 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. They join in the refrain, 'He was still hungry', and describe the cocoon as 'fat' as they look at the pictures. Through these story sessions children are learning that print carries meaning. Mark making takes place regularly and structured writing activities, for example, writing numbers up to five, also take place under adult supervision.

Children are good communicators with high self-esteem. They confidently say the colour of an object when staff ask them. Children volunteer favourite songs to sing and state, 'I've got that book at home' when staff mention particular books.

Children reinforce their knowledge of the weather and the days of the week at register time. They learn about the wider world through topic work, for example, exciting work on the planets involves making a large rocket from boxes. Children climb into this to play and staff link it with a favourite story of the children, about a bear going to the moon. A recent topic has been on planting. This involved children going outside digging for worms and exploring the soil. In this way children learn about their local environment. They also learn about their bodies and keeping them healthy as they use a giant toothbrush to clean an enormous set of teeth.

Creative activities are very popular. Children are seen concentrating intently as they make collage models. They work for long periods talking to staff as they glue and stick feathers and pre-cut paper shapes onto cardboard boxes. Children show their knowledge of shapes and sizes as they describe the 'small square' they are about to glue on to their model. They proudly point and show their models to adults.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The equal opportunities policy helps to promote anti-discriminatory practice. Children's individual needs are met through staff working closely with parents. For example, children who are not yet toilet trained are welcomed into the setting and staff work with parents when toilet training is started. Resources represent positive images of different cultures within society. For example, books include factual ones on different religious faiths and dolls represent different ethnic groups. Children are seen pushing buggies with dolls in them, while other children dress up in non-stereotypical clothes as they engage in play activities. Children's learning about other cultures and festivals helps them to value everyone as an individual and begin to appreciate different traditions. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff are consistent in the ways that they promote children's positive behaviour and children are seen behaving well. Good manners are encouraged, for example, at snack times staff comment on children remembering to say, 'thank you'. Turn taking and sharing are encouraged by staff. A 'child of the week' is selected to take home a special doll who joins in their home life and is photographed to show the other children what they have done. This helps to link playgroup and home life for the children.

Children are inducted into the playgroup by visiting for a trial session. A child is seen settling happily with their parent present. Children's developmental needs are catered for appropriately. For example, older children, who attend the morning sessions, answer their names at register time, whereas younger children, who attend in the afternoons, wave when their name is read out. Younger children who are unsettled keep comforters, such as dummies with them for reassurance. Staff hold and cuddle children, rubbing their backs and talking quietly to them, as they gradually encourage them to take part in activities.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from the good relationships and informal contact between their parents and staff. Parents are given adequate information on a daily basis regarding how children have been and what they have done. Parents value this daily contact and comment enthusiastically on the friendliness of the staff. A newsletter is produced each term that informs parents and carers about forthcoming events and topics being covered. However, there are currently no formal systems in place to involve parents in children's learning, such as topic work or activities they can try at home. An annual report is provided for each child that details their educational progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management within the setting is satisfactory. The Manager has been in post for a relatively short time, during which she has liaised frequently with the Chairperson of the Playgroup Committee, and she has been proactive in fund raising. For example, monetary grants have been received and equipment has been donated by parents to enhance the provision. Daily routines provide a mixture of free choice and adult organised activities. These ensure opportunities for children to socialise during their play and to experience times of activity as well as quiet periods.

There have been some staff changes recently. All staff are suitably vetted and contingency plans are in operation in the event of staff illness. Most children attend for two years, in the afternoon in their first year and in the morning in their second year. The staff team is working together well and a core team, that works both morning and afternoon sessions, ensures continuity and security for children enhancing their experience.

Records include relevant consents, for example, for children to go the 'ball zone'. All the documentation required by the National Standards is in place which promotes the safety and well-being of the children. A range of policies and procedures are available for parents which keeps them informed about the organisation of the setting and their children's care.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to review the grouping arrangements for the morning sessions to enable younger children to access a wider variety of play activities. This has been addressed by including a wider range of messy activities and by dividing the children into age groups for part of the session so that activities can be geared to their specific developmental needs.

The provider was also asked to promote healthy eating by reviewing snack times. These now include milk, water or orange juice to drink, with fresh fruit and biscuits to eat. Children are

learning about healthy eating as this is the current topic. In these ways the promotion of healthy eating for children is being addressed. This helps children to develop their knowledge about healthy foods.

The provider was asked to seek fire safety advice about the use of the smaller play room. The fire service have visited and are satisfied that this room is safe. The radiator in that room has been made inaccessible by fitting a firm metal grill that encases it completely. Through these actions children's health, development and safety is being protected and promoted.

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 can be seen on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- make frayed carpet safe in the small room
- ensure fresh drinking water is continually available
- develop planning and assessment procedures for the under threes using a scheme such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

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 short term planning systems to include children's next steps and the desired learning intentions
- ensure staff are deployed to fully support children's play and learning.

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