

# Highfield Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY341221
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 April 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann Austen
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Pastures Community Centre, Welford Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN2 8PN
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<b>Registered person</b>	Julia Clare Snedker
<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?

Highfield Playgroup re-registered in 2006 and operates from The Pastures Community Centre in the Kingsthorpe area of Northampton. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:20 to 11:50 during the school term only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 34 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the surrounding area. The playgroup is able to support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs six staff members. Four members of staff, including the supervisor hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification. The playgroup receives support from the Early Years Mentor Teacher.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean environment. Their good health is well promoted because staff adhere to sound hygiene routines. As a result children successfully learn about and adopt simple hygiene routines such as washing and drying their hands after messy play and after using the toilet and fetching a tissue to wipe a runny nose. This sustains levels of hygiene and helps to prevent the spread of infection. Children's welfare is safeguarded because there is always a member of staff who has a current certificate in paediatric first aid on duty to administer first aid in the event of an accident. Clear procedures are in place for the administration of medication and if children are unwell.

Children's good health is promoted by a range of wholesome, nutritious snacks. Any special dietary requirements are complied with in partnership with the parents. Children enjoy fresh fruit, raw vegetables, bread sticks, beans on toast, crackers and cheese spread. They are often involved in helping to prepare their own snacks and are encouraged to try new foods. For example, during 'tasting sessions' children try different fruits such as pineapples, strawberries and melon. Snack times are relaxed, social occasions where children sit together around the table to enjoy their food, each other's company and develop good table manners. Children remain well hydrated and comfortable because fresh drinking water is available to them throughout the session.

Children are developing an awareness of healthy lifestyles as they take part in a good range of daily physical activities in the fresh air. They learn about being appropriately dressed when taking part in outdoor activities. Children are developing the confidence to enjoy moving with control in a variety of ways. They have fun as they play parachute games, pedal and manoeuvre wheeled toys, slide down the small slide, balance on the balance beams, push the buggies, jump into the hoops, roll, catch and kick balls and stretch their bodies as they dance and move to music. Children enjoy activities which develop their hand-to-eye coordination and manual dexterity. For example, children thread beads, use spades to dig in the sand and build using construction resources.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's daily safety is prioritized because staff have a sound understanding in this area. Staff carry out informal safety checks each day before children arrive, ensuring that all areas are clear of hazards. For example, staff check the toilets and outside areas and ensure that electric sockets are fitted with socket covers. This enables children to move around safely and independently. Access to the premises is carefully monitored and staff deployment ensures that children are well supervised at all times. Fire drills are practised and visitors to the setting are monitored. Children are beginning to learn the importance of keeping safe by responding to the guidelines set out by the staff. For example, children are taught to handle utensils such as scissors safely. Children's welfare is safeguarded by the staff's appropriate knowledge of local child protection procedures and their understanding of their responsibilities for the children in their care.

Children use safe, well-maintained furniture and equipment. This ensures children are comfortable and supports their play and development. Children are interested in and play with

the adequate range of resources which staff check to ensure that they are safe and suitable for the children's individual needs. However, children do not always have sufficient opportunities to select further resources and play materials to fully promote their learning and development.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup. They participate in activities which promote their emotional, social, physical, and intellectual capabilities. Staff are continuing to develop their knowledge and the implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children are happy, relaxed and settled. They learn at their own pace and complete activities in their own time. Relationships are good and children are developing social awareness and a growing ability to share and be co-operative. As the children play staff listen to and talk to the children about what they are doing. This encourages children to think and promotes their language development. Children enjoy playing musical instruments such as the drum and xylophone. They enthusiastically sing songs, for example, 'The clock says tick tock', 'Tommy thumb' and 'Incy wincey spider'. This promotes children's creative development. Children's imaginary play is supported as they play with small world resources such as the dolls house and roadway sets.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are continuing to develop their knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. As a result, children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. A new planning system is currently being implemented, learning intentions are identified and activities are evaluated. However, evaluations are not always used effectively to help inform future planning. Planning is used flexibly to build on children's interests and to take account of events that occur to extend their learning. For example, children play outside in the snow. They build snowmen and make snowballs. Staff complete focused observations and make spontaneous notes as children participate in the activities. However, observations and assessments are not sufficiently linked to the stepping stones to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals. As a result, staff are not able to accurately monitor children's achievements and progress or identify possible gaps in their learning. Staff form very good relationships with the children supporting their play. However, they do not always sufficiently challenge and extend older, more able children's learning. Generally effective use is made of the accommodation and resources. However, the environment is not always organised effectively to enable children to select further resources for themselves, to enable them to initiate their own play and ideas.

Children show a positive attitude to learning and are eager to explore the activities and resources provided. They form good relationships with staff and their peers, seeking out others to share experiences, for example, as they play in the home corner and build towers out of shoe boxes. Children are learning to work cooperatively together, to listen to others and work as part of a group. For example, children sit in a circle together and roll and throw the ball to one another. Older children concentrate and persist as they practise their cutting skills and complete puzzles. Children are becoming increasingly independent in their personal skills. They are encouraged to put on their coats for outdoor play, help to sweep up the rice, make sandwiches for snack and pour their own drinks.

Children are beginning to communicate with growing confidence and are able to make their needs known. They play games to begin to distinguish one sound from another, however, this

is not sufficiently reinforced by staff throughout the session. Children make marks as they draw, chalk and paint, however, children do not always have sufficient opportunities to experiment with writing as part of their play. Older children are beginning to draw recognisable pictures and are proud of their achievements. Children listen to stories such as 'The very hungry caterpillar' and look at books for enjoyment, handling them with care. However, books are not provided at every session and the environment is generally not rich in print. Children are developing their counting and number recognition skills. They count the number of beads as they thread, and the number of orange segments at snack time. However, numbers as labels are not generally displayed within the environment and older, more-able children are not fully challenged to consolidate their mathematical skills by solving simple number problems in practical activities and everyday routines. Children are beginning to use language to describe shape, size and position.

Children enjoy exploring construction resources. They fit the 'marble run' together, make towers out of Duplo bricks and join recycled materials together to make models. Children are beginning to develop an awareness of technology as they play with resources such as the computer and calculators. However, these resources are not always accessible to the children to support their learning. Children explore a range of media and materials. For example, children handle shaving foam, custard, shredded paper, pasta, jelly, sand and water. They make papier mache caterpillars and immerse their hands in the cornflour mix. Children enjoy getting messy. Children differentiate colours with increasing confidence, and learn by using their senses. For example, children smell strawberries, limes, oranges and pineapple. Children use their imaginations during role play, they play in the home corner, make dens, 'bake bread in the bakery', 'care for animals at the vets', and 'take books out of the library'. Children are developing their physical skills, moving with increasing control and co-ordination. However, children do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their climbing skills.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are warmly welcomed into the playgroup. They are valued, respected and acknowledged throughout the session, which promotes their positive self-image. Children develop a sense of belonging as they form good relationships with staff and their peers and daily routines help young children feel secure and settled. Children are beginning to appreciate the diversity of our society as they participate in activities about their own and other cultures and beliefs. For example, children celebrate Christmas and Easter and make candle holders to celebrate Diwali. Children enjoy making pig masks and use chop sticks to taste Chinese food in celebration of the Chinese New Year. However, they have insufficient opportunities to appreciate our similarities and differences as they play. This is because resources that positively reflect themselves and people of other races, cultures and abilities are limited. Although there are no children currently attending the setting with special needs, strategies are in place to identify and support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff welcome support and advice from parents and other professionals. Children's understanding of right and wrong is increased as they respond to gentle reminders to share and be kind to one another. As a result, children begin to learn what is expected of them and behave generally well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's care, welfare and development are promoted because relationships with parents are open, friendly and professional. Parents receive information about the setting and policies and procedures are available on the notice board. Parents are encouraged to help settle their child into the playgroup and clear systems are in place to share information about their care. This

ensures that parental wishes are respected and the individual needs of the children are met. Parents speak positively about the setting.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive information about the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. However, parents receive limited information about how this is implemented. Information about the children's needs and interests are sought from parents before children join the group. This is used to help settle the children, however, this information is not sufficiently linked to the curriculum, or used as starting point in the children's learning against the stepping stones. Parents are able to speak to staff at any time, however, they do not have sufficient opportunities to discuss children's achievements and progress towards the early learning goals. Children are encouraged to bring in items to support the theme. However, parents are not given ideas to continue some play and learning activities at home.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the generally effective organisation of space, time and resources and are able to move freely between indoor and outdoor play. However, children have insufficient opportunities to select further resources independently to fully extend their play and ideas. Children play independently as well as receiving adult support and encouragement. High staff to child ratios ensure that children are safe and well supervised. Children's welfare, care and learning is promoted by a range of records, policies and procedures. Records are stored securely and confidentiality is maintained. Children are cared for by suitably qualified staff who actively develop their practice through accessing and attending further training courses.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The registered person is committed to continually improve the care and education for the children. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities, they are enthusiastic and work well together as a team. They attend regular planning meetings, however, systems are not in place to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education to identify areas for improvement. Overall, children's needs are met.

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

Not applicable

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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 by 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):

- increase the opportunities for children to access further resources to encourage them to initiate their own play and learning (also applies to nursery education)
- develop resources to promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

#### 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):

- continue to develop teaching methods to ensure that there is sufficient challenge for older, more able children
- ensure that observations and assessments are sufficiently linked to the stepping stones to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals, and used to plan the next steps in learning for individual children
- develop systems to inform parents about how the Foundation Stage curriculum is implemented, to share what they know about their children when they enter the Foundation Stage, and ensure that parents receive regular information about children's achievements and progress towards the early learning goals, and how they can further support their children's learning at home
- develop systems to monitor and evaluate the provision of nursery education.

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)