

Herrick Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY255108
Inspection date	07 June 2007
Inspector	Patricia Bowler
Setting Address	Lockerbie Avenue, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE4 7NJ
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Registered person	Herrick Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Herrick Playgroup opened in 1990. It operates in a sole purpose use unit in the grounds of Herrick Primary School in Leicester. A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 8.50 to 11.20 and 11.30 to 15.15 during term time. The setting also provides Out of school care from 07.30 to 08.50 and 15.15 to 17.30 during term time and from 08.30 to 17.30 during school holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 58 children from two years to under eight years on roll. Of these, 22 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local catchment area and Herrick Primary School. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and most children speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs six members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in bright premises which offer natural daylight from windows on three sides. The temperature is well maintained and adjusted accordingly to maintain a healthy atmosphere.

Comprehensive health policies and procedure are followed to maintain high standards of hygiene. Systems are in place to ensure staff are kept informed of relevant issues as they are discussed at staff meetings. Disposable aprons and gloves are used for changing children and meal preparation as robust cleaning routines are systematically maintained to prevent the spread of infection. The use of antibacterial sprays to wipe all surfaces including the tables following activities, before they are used for snack and meal times, ensure they are safe for children to eat their food.

Children learn about personal hygiene and are able to attend to their own toilet needs. Picture prompts across the sinks remind children to wash their hands and they indicate the routines pointing to the picture denoting hand washing as they do so. They operate press activated taps and use soap and more able children assist younger children to achieve this. Children know the daily routines and instinctively wash their hands before meals. They seek appropriate help when needed and alert staff of any problems. For example when they are unable to access disposable towels from the dispenser. Tissues are provided which children use independently or with reminders, placing used tissues in a covered bin.

There is provision for rest and sleep on low level sofas situated in role play areas. These are used during play as children engage in familiar practices such as feeding 'babies' and looking at books.

Children's health and welfare is maintained as clear documents and practices ensure any medication is stored and administered correctly and accurately recorded. All staff have attended first aid training. First aid kits are available including one taken on outings to ensure any accidents are dealt with effectively.

The outside area is well maintained to offer free flow access when the weather permits. This offers activities on wheeled toys and soft play equipment to enhance children's physical development. A range of table activities support their play and enjoyment. During the inspection they enjoy taking turns to complete a sponsored bike ride around a marked circuit for a national charity. They listen intently as staff explain the proceeds will go to less able children who cannot ride their bikes as they do. Children jump confidently on the hand held trampoline and develop their balance and coordination as they climb on soft play equipment. The outside sand pit is covered to prevent cross infection when not in use.

Children benefit from a nutritious range of meals and snacks. They satisfy their needs before and after school choosing from a range of healthy options including fresh fruit. A recent project, run by a local supermarket, focused on healthy breakfasts. The project included inviting parents to increase their awareness of the importance of breakfast with suggestions for different options to impact positively on home routines.

Water is available at all times for children to address their needs. Snacks are varied, including fresh fruit and celebration foods for various festivals. They enjoy fresh milk in small plastic

bottles which are delivered daily and use straws to increase their independence and dispose of these after use. A juice alternative is available although milk is positively promoted.

Children bring packed lunches and provision is available for fridge storage. Parents are advised to include healthy options and no nut products to protect children from possible allergic reactions. When one child dropped food from home, a nutritious sandwich was provided with cheese and salad vegetables. Drinks are provided for those who do not bring them. A system operates where parents can opt for the group to provide a meal at a nominal price which is freshly prepared in consultation with children and parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are secure because there are buzzer connections to telephone receivers inside the setting from the main outside gate. Children's safety is maintained as visitors are identified before being admitted and are recorded in the visitor register.

The setting has a fenced perimeter within the school grounds, including an outside area which can be divided with a locked gate to provide two separate areas. The outer gate to the school remains securely locked and has buzzer access. These measures ensure children can play safely outside.

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out twice termly to include all fixtures and fittings, toys, resources and equipment. Clear policies and procedures are effectively followed by staff to ensure all areas accessed by children are suitable and safe. This is clearly identified practice from the risk assessment procedures. Toys and play equipment are checked regularly for wear and repair.

There is a telephone on site for external communication. Parents have this number in case contact is required.

The setting is welcoming to parents and children with displays of creative work, photographs of past events. Early learning picture prompts increase children's knowledge and awareness of positive behaviour codes. The room is divided with low level cupboards to provide two areas and furniture is suitably arranged to allow children to move freely. There are times when the group operates between the areas whilst joining for stories and registration.

Robust procedures for fire safety are effectively carried out to ensure children know what to do in an emergency and can be evacuated safely. Equipment is checked on an annual basis to ensure it remains in full working order.

A comprehensive outings policy ensures children are cared for away from the setting. Procedures for lost and uncollected children ensure appropriate action is taken to safeguard them. They learn about keeping themselves safe and joined in a discussion about safety procedures as they listened to a story about a child who got separated from his parent. Some children talk about holding an adults hand and keeping close to them. The discussion moved onto crossing roads and travelling in cars and they listened intently to road safety issues and the use of seatbelts and car seats.

Children are escorted safely between the setting and school. Records of their times of arrival in the morning and time of leaving for school ensure their presence and arrival at school are noted. Additional staff are employed for Out of school care.

A register is taken before children leave school and when they arrive at the setting. They are collected by a staff member and know to walk together across the playground before entering through the rear door of the premises. This ensures that children leaving by the front door at the end of sessions cannot leave the premises accidentally.

Parents sign children in and out of the setting as they arrive and depart to ensure their presence is recorded and registers are accurate in the event of emergency evacuation.

A comprehensive child protection policy is established and works effectively in practice to promote children's safety and welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well as they are greeted by staff who offer cuddles and reassurance as they leave their parents. They gather as a whole group for registration where they are greeted individually and encouraged to return the greeting relating warmly to positive staff interaction. A range of interesting activities are presented to encourage their play and learning but these are not always varied to offer different activities for children who attend for the full day. They play happily making active choices about the activities they wish to take part in.

Children develop peer group relationships with younger children often playing solitary or parallel to older children as they gain in confidence to join in. They seek appropriate support from staff often using gestures as they develop their use of spoken English. They benefit as staff are fluent in more than one language and are able to reinforce spoken language for them. Although staff interaction is good, there are few opportunities for children to speak in small groups to encourage their spoken language. Story time occurs as a whole group and is disrupted because the different ages and concentration spans of all the children are not fully considered.

Well established role play areas help them to develop their imagination as they make links with home. Organised access to outside play enables children to develop their physical skills in climbing and riding wheeled toys and they gain control of their bodies through organised activities such as music and movement.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage, using a good range of teaching methods to assist children's learning. Picture prompts help them to gain awareness of the daily routines especially at tidying away time. A range of interesting topics, including road safety encourage children's personal awareness. Staff use planning to good effect to promote the progress of individual children through the stepping stones. Assessments and observations are good showing clear information to identify the next steps in their learning. Monitoring procedures are clearly recorded to inform staff if learning intentions have been achieved to identify ways to improve teaching. Accurate recording methods identify children's progress. The range of activities extend and challenge more able children as they successfully name their creative work.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. a strong emphasis promotes their personal, social and emotional development. Staff actively support their growing independence as children address their own personal needs and follow daily routines. A balance of adult led and child initiated activities encourage self selection and choice. Children recognise

their own needs accessing water when they are thirsty and one child recognised it was almost snack time as he expressed his hunger. Snack times are well organised as children sit together in small groups. However, there are missed opportunities to encourage spoken language as staff do not always sit with them to encourage social interaction.

Some children count independently to five but rote count as a group to twenty five as they count the number present at registration time. They join enthusiastically in singing number rhymes and a music and movement session following instructions such as up, down, left and right to increase their knowledge of prepositions. They anticipate instructions joining in gleefully as they shout ready, steady go.

Good progress is attained in mark making. Emergent writing is developing as some children form recognisable letters and others are able to write their names. They practice this in situations such as identifying their own creative work and in role play situations. Children do not independently handle the wide range of books as they rarely enter the quiet area except for group sessions.

Children engage in a wide range of creative activities. This is evident in current plans and in the work displayed within the setting through pictures including the use of paint, crayons and sticking materials. They access equipment such as scissors, glue sticks and collage materials with varying levels of dexterity. Children produce their own creations in themed work and a wall display of collage cars clearly represent children's differing age appropriate skill and ability.

A free flow system operates, when weather permits with indoor and outdoor activities running simultaneously. Children develop large physical skills as they jump enthusiastically on a hand held trampoline and increase their balance and coordination climbing on soft play equipment. They pedal and steer around a marked circuit to complete a sponsored bike ride. A group of children enjoy aiming beanbags into a receptacle a short distance away, rejoicing when they are successful.

Attractive wall displays increase children's awareness of cultural backgrounds and celebrations. Interesting topics are introduced to encourage their awareness of the wider world and they listen intently as they learn about keeping themselves safe when out in the community, and express compassion when staff explain the purpose of the bike ride and where the sponsor money is going. Children have regular access to three computers to progress appropriately in their use of intermediate communication technology and experiment with resources such as clocks and hand operated toys to develop their awareness of how things work.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents is good. Newsletters and parent meetings provide opportunities for staff to share children's care and progress. Parents contribute to the initial assessment at the beginning of nursery education funding which is provided for children aged three years. Children move into the nursery class within the infant school on the same site at four years of age.

Excellent information is provided about the setting in a clear and comprehensive prospectus. Procedures for discussing and recording information, including an 'all about me' form ensures children's individual needs are met well. Information is provided in different languages to reflect the diverse local community and systems are established to provide verbal translation if required. The notice board at the entrance to the setting informs them of principle policy procedures

and photographs of staff ensure they are able to identify their child's key worker. Parents are positively encouraged into the setting as they are invited to various activities such as the promotion of healthy breakfasts and at the official opening of the new premises. A recent questionnaire identified strong agreement to the levels of care their children receive and positive verbal feedback was expressed in identifying any concerns relating to children's development and progress. Clear procedures are established to enable staff to work successfully with other agencies to ensure children with additional needs receive appropriate care. A record is established to record and manage any complaints made by parents.

Children's sense of belonging is enhanced through daily contact using both written and verbal communication to ensure staff and parents are kept fully informed. Good procedures and secure relationships help children to settle. Children benefit from the staff's positive awareness of equal opportunities and inclusion of all children. Children make active choices about their play and use their imagination well to extend some play situations.

Children develop good relationships with peers and mostly interact appropriately in small and large groups. They are supported by positive staff interaction, reinforced in their first language to develop strategies to negotiate, take turns and work harmoniously with others. Children know simple rules such as sharing and tidying away as they talk about these in group situations. Pictures depicting simple rules are displayed within the setting and picture prompts enhance their awareness of daily routines.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides. Arrangements promote children's health and safety and they receive good levels of care appropriate to their age and developmental stages. Space and resources are organised well to enable children to move freely. Activities are presented to capture children's interest but are not always varied to offer variety to children who stay for the full day .

Comprehensive policies and procedures, which contributes to children's well-being are established to ensure their specific needs are fully recorded and provided for. A very good prospectus ensures parents are fully informed of the service provided and clear written and verbal communication keeps them fully informed about their child's care. Secure arrangements ensure confidentiality is maintained.

Leadership and management is good. The staff's training needs have been identified and a programme is in place to improve their knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is a clear vision for ongoing improvement as the setting is positively supported by a very active committee. The learning intentions in activities are explicitly clear and continually evolving systems to monitor the quality of the nursery education are implemented to evaluate the impact on children's learning and development.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was required to obtain written parental consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. This has been included in children's information files in order that appropriate action can be taken if necessary to ensure their welfare is maintained.

In nursery education a recommendation was raised to ensure the assessment of children's progress is used to identify the next steps in their learning and planned activities are based on their interests and what they need to do next to ensure that older and more able children are sufficiently challenged. The group were also asked to ensure that plans cover all aspects of the stepping stones evenly and consistently to embed children's learning. They were requested to develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the educational provision for children.

The system for recording children's progress has been improved with the introduction of spontaneous and planned observations. These are used successfully to record children's progress and plan for their next steps in learning. Clear planning, covering all aspects of the stepping stones, has been established with a system to identify and monitoring if learning intentions are clear and have been met to impact effectively on children's progress.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by the parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 the registered person selects resources and provides activities and play opportunities which change to offer variety to sustain the interest of those children who stay for the full day

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):

- improve adult led group times to ensure the size and age range does not have a negative impact on children's learning and development. Encourage children to independently access the quiet area to develop their enjoyment of handling and looking at books.
- deploy staff more effectively to support and encourage children's use of spoken language.

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