



## Hodnet Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	224114
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 June 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Mary Anne Henderson
<b>Setting Address</b>	Hodnet Primary School, Shrewsbury Street, Hodnet, Market Drayton, Shropshire, TF9 3NS
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<b>Registered person</b>	Hodnet Pre-School Playgroup
<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*

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## 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?

Hodnet Pre-school is a committee-run group which was registered in 1995. The group operates from a demountable classroom sited in the grounds of Hodnet Primary School situated in the village of Hodnet in Shropshire. It serves the local areas. It is presently open during term times only, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 09:00 to 11:45 and 12:30 to 15:15 and on Thursdays and Fridays from 09:00 to 12:00. The group also run a toddler's group on Thursdays from 13:00

to 15:00.

The group have use of an enclosed outdoor play area, the school hall during some sessions and the playground within the school grounds.

Four members of staff work with the children, three of whom are qualified and one of whom is currently undertaking a qualification in early years. There are currently 39 children on roll, which includes 36 funded 3 and 4 year olds. The group offers support for children with special needs. There are no children attending for whom English is an additional language. The group receives teacher mentor support through the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

Staff use aspects of the High Scope teaching and learning methods in the group.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a range of activities that contribute to their health. They know about the importance of hygiene as they wash their hands before eating and after messy play and outdoor play. They learn about caring for their teeth and their body through stories and activities that help them explore which food is bad or good for their health. Children confidently see to their own care needs, for example, they take themselves to the toilet, help themselves to tissues which are nearby and they put on their own coats and hats for outdoor play.

Children and staff have been involved in the 'Food for Thought' campaign. This is promoted by the Pre-school Learning Alliance who provide children with a good range of healthy choice snacks over a period of eight weeks. The children have been enjoying the healthy choice snacks which includes apples, bananas, melon and crackers and the group are continuing with the campaign ensuring all children access a range of healthy choice snacks at every session.

The children also help themselves to drinks of water during their snack time where they are encouraged to be involved in pouring their own drinks. Children's health should be further promoted through free access to drinking water at all times, especially during hot weather. The children enjoy being sociable with each other and the staff during snack times where they chat about their interests, families and pets.

The children enjoy a range of indoor and outdoor activities that positively promote their physical development, for example, they walk and run around the outdoor play garden, ride on tractors and scooters, use the climbing frame and slide and throw balls and hoops. They are also physically active indoors when they are involved in Sticky Kids exercise which encourages the children to follow instructions through the use of an audio tape.

Children's individual needs with regard to health and dietary requirements are kept up to date through good two way verbal exchange of information with parents at the

start and end of each session and during planned open-evenings where parents can come in and talk to the staff about their child.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are kept safe as the staff supervise them during indoor and outdoor play times and during arrivals and departures when the door is manned by a member of staff at all times. Children are kept safe as the staff ensure all areas are made secure throughout the session. The space is set out to meet the children's needs and includes space to be physical, eat and rest. Children access a range of furniture and equipment which is appropriate to their developmental needs, well maintained and conforms to safety.

Precautions are taken to promote the health and safety of the children within the setting. For example, the group implement a risk assessment checking all areas and equipment for hazards before the children arrive. Children's safety and welfare is also promoted by the staff as they have an understanding of, and are qualified in, first aid. Most staff have an understanding of child protection issues, however, children's safety and welfare should be further promoted by ensuring that all staff have a very sound understanding of child protection procedures in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee. This should include an understanding of the need to ensure there are comprehensive records kept on all visitors to the setting.

The children learn about safety and keeping themselves safe through a range of activities and stories and through the use of visitors. For example, the staff remind children about how to use the outdoor equipment safely and the children have met the local fire officers who came out to talk to the children about fire safety.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school as they involve themselves in their activities. They have the opportunity to access a range of activities and resources that promote their social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. For example, the children enjoy access to dough and sand, painting, construction and imaginary play. Children also enjoy a range of planned and spontaneous play. For example, they watch as a helicopter flies by, talk about the aeroplanes they saw recently at the Cosford Air Show and draw pictures of aeroplanes at the activity tables. They use the play garden where they run around in the fresh air and they enjoy using a range of challenging outdoor equipment.

At times children do not have access to a broad range of resources and equipment for free play time, for example, free access to glue resources, the computer and free access to dressing up resources which are not stored near to the home play area. The home play area is not always set up to encourage children's enjoyment and pleasure as the equipment is stored in boxes.

The staff have a copy of the Birth to Three Matters framework. Staff should ensure they attend training on implementing a framework such as Birth to Three Matters to ensure children in their earliest years are well supported and their individual needs met.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children enjoy the range of activities that are made available to them. They are confident and display a good sense of self-esteem and belonging in an environment where their work is valued and displayed. Children behave well and they are beginning to have an awareness of the concept of right and wrong as they show consideration for their peers and explore a range of feelings through stories and activities. Children enjoy a range of resources that positively reflects diversity including positive images of people with disabilities.

The children make choices about what they would like to play with during child-initiated play time. However, they do not have free access to a broad range of resources and equipment during these times, for example, glue resources and dressing up clothes are not made freely accessible. The home play area resources are left in boxes making the area uninviting for the children.

Children communicate well with each other and the staff as they play at the activity tables and enjoy outdoor play. They chat about what they are doing and they show excitement as they spontaneously watch a helicopter fly by. Children's knowledge is extended during spontaneous play as the staff make use of opportunities to use open-questioning to extend and consolidate the children's learning. The children enjoy free access to a range of books and they can sit quietly and look through a book of their choice. They help themselves to pencils and paper, write their names and numerals in their workbooks and draw and paint pictures during child-initiated play. Children enjoy story time where they can join in with the story and predict the story ending. They enjoy a range of small world imaginary play and extend their language for thinking as they play co-operatively with their peers.

Children explore mathematics as they count how many girls and boys there are in attendance and whether there are more girls than boys. They explore shape and measure as they play with the construction sets and the sand and water activities. Children also explore mathematical concepts as they involve themselves in baking activities where they weigh out the ingredients to make Easter egg nests. At times the children are not able to access the computer during child-initiated play, as it is switched off. Children's interest in information communication technology should be further developed through free access to the computer during child-initiated play. The children have an awareness of features in the immediate local area as they visit places of interest such as the local post office, nearby shops and the nearby Hodnet Hall Gardens where they look at plant life and wildlife.

The children explore a range of festivals around the calendar year including Chinese new year, Easter and Christmas when they are involved in stories, art work and making cards for their families.

Children move about the indoor and outdoor areas with confidence. They practice

movement through access to a range of indoor and outdoor equipment such as the climbing frame and slide and they enjoy running around freely and exploring the garden play area. Children access a range of tools and resources which promote their development, for example, they pour their own drinks at snack time, write and draw, manipulate dough and use brushes to create art work.

Children enjoy musical instruments during planned activities where they are able to listen to and explore sound. They also enjoy access to a range of imaginary play equipment such as cars, trucks, construction resources and small world people.

Practitioners have an understanding of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and they ensure planning encompasses the stepping stones, showing what children will do and what key questioning will be used to engage the children's interest. The staff make good use of spontaneous play opportunities to extend and consolidate children's learning through the use of open-ended questioning. They work well as a team and meet regularly to discuss issues. The staff are knowledgeable about ways to support children with special needs. They consult with parents and they know who to contact for further support. Staff provide a warm and welcoming environment where children's confidence and self-esteem are good. The staff should however, broaden the range of resources and equipment made available for children, including access to the computer, glue resources and home play resources, during child-initiated play, so that they can make real choices about what they want to do. Staff provide opportunities for children to find out about the wider world. They take the children on outings to local places of interest to extend their understanding of the local environment and the local community.

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

The provision is good.

The children have equal access to a range of resources that are made available to them. They explore diversity through a good range of accessible resources and interesting festivals throughout the calendar year. The staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure special needs are identified and that support is accessed where it is required to ensure consistency, continuity and inclusion for all children.

Children are well behaved and are able to manage their own behaviour through adult support and guidance when this is needed. Children's welfare is well supported because the staff have a very sound understanding of behaviour management and all staff implement consistent strategies. The strategies used ensure children's individual needs are met and promotes children's confidence.

Children's welfare and learning needs are promoted very well through sound partnership with parents. There are positive relationships with the parents because the staff provide verbal feedback during arrivals and departures to ensure consistency and continuity. The parents attend the group's open-evenings where they can look at their child's development files and talk to a key worker about their child's progression through

pre-school. Parents provided Ofsted with very positive comments on the care and education of their child. Comments included 'staff are wonderful. They are approachable and friendly and they tell me all about my child's progression.' and 'The children are cared for in one main room so children are well supervised. It's a great place.'

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Information is shared openly with parents using the notice boards and through informative newsletters which tells parents what is going on at the pre-school, including plans on future themes.

Overall, the children's spiritual, moral, social and emotional development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The registered person uses effective recruitment and vetting procedures, for example, vacancies are advertised locally and vetting procedures include checking references and ensuring all staff are checked through the Criminal Records Bureau. Policies and procedures are in place to support the provision and they are shared with the parents. This contributes well to the children's welfare and continuity of care and education for all children. Staff attend ongoing training with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and they work well together and plan for children's activities.

The required documentation is in place which ensures children's welfare and safety needs are acknowledged and met. Children benefit from staff who support them, are qualified and have an understanding of children's care and educational needs. The group have records of attendance of children, staff and parents on rota. Visitors are marked down on the register, however, to safeguard children's welfare and safety further, the group should ensure that there are comprehensive details kept on all visitors to the group, including names, times of arrivals and departures and the purpose of the visit.

Leadership and management of the provision is satisfactory. Staff work well as a team and meet with the committee regularly to discuss childcare and education issues. Management and staff do not effectively assess, monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education. For example, activities are not observed and evaluated to measure impact on children and the implementation of the last action plan has also not been evaluated to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Management provide staff with ongoing appraisals, job descriptions and contractual agreements.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the time of the last inspection, the group was asked to address two actions and a

number of key issues and recommendations. Firstly the group was asked to ensure that all changes in the staff are notified to Ofsted and that appropriate vetting is completed for all staff. There is now a new committee and they ensure that all changes in staff are notified to Ofsted as a priority and that all new staff members complete clearances with the Criminal Records Bureau as soon as they are appointed. The group was also asked to meet recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer. They did this by ensuring that there are evacuation signs on both exits. The staff, visitors and parents on rota now know what to do in an emergency to ensure their own and the children's safety.

The group was asked to ensure that registration arrangements show times when children, staff and visitors are present and to also conduct a risk assessment of the premises and activities, identifying action to be taken to minimise risks. The group now ensures that if a child or member of staff arrive late or leave before the end of the session, that the actual times of attendance are recorded. The group do not however, keep comprehensive records relating to the visitors. For example, the group should further improve registration records by ensuring that all visitors sign in with names, times of arrival and departures and the purpose of the visit. The group improved the risk assessment undertaken by implementing a risk assessment format which outlines areas and equipment that will be checked. The group are further improving the risk assessment format used by ensuring it includes all elements as outlined in the National Standards and guidance.

The group was asked to ensure that children were appropriately grouped to meet their individual needs, tailor activities to extend the learning of the more able child offering support for those requiring additional help and to improve the organisation of large focus groups to ensure sufficient challenge for all children.

The group ensure children are appropriately grouped by providing sessions for the three year olds in the mornings and sessions for the four year olds in the afternoons. The group improved the organisation of large group focus time by ensuring that there is a range of activities available for all skill levels for example, children may choose to play with the Duplo or the Lego construction sets depending on their confidence and ability. They also ensure that more able or less able children are offered one to one support by staff to meet their needs. Children of all abilities are now able to play with a range of suitably challenging equipment and resources and receive appropriate support from the staff.

The group was asked to use assessment and planning to take into account the developmental needs of individual children. The group made improvements to the planning and now ensure that all funded children are observed while engaged in their activities. The key workers observe children's social, intellectual, physical and emotional development and they now use this information to plan for the next steps for children's learning.

The group was asked to provide opportunities for parents to receive regular information on their child's progress and to include parents in the process of monitoring their child's development. The group implemented a home-group link book to exchange information with the parents. However, this was unsuccessful due to none-return of the link books by some of the parents. The group now have



open-evenings where the parents can come into the group for an appointment to meet with their child's key worker. Parents can then look at examples of their child's work displayed on the walls, look at their work books and development files and discuss their child's ongoing progression through pre-school.

The group was asked to introduce activities to encourage children's interest in books. The group improved the book area by ensuring it is situated in a quiet carpeted area so children can read in comfort and a range of soft seating and cushions were also provided. The book area is now more inviting to the children and they make good use of the area during child-initiated play time.

The group was asked to ensure that snacks provided are healthy and nutritious. The group have been involved in a campaign promoted by the Pre-School Learning Alliance who provide children with a range of healthy snacks to encourage healthy eating. If groups continue providing healthy snacks after the campaign, they will receive a Gold Award certificate. Following the campaign the group decided to carry on providing a range of healthy food for snacks including bananas, apples, melon and crackers. The children are now provided with a range of healthy foods at every session.

Finally, the group was asked to include the contact details of Ofsted as the regulatory body in the complaints procedure available to parents and to improve communications between the staff, committee and the parents. The group updated their complaints policy. It now outlines the name and address of Ofsted as the regulatory body should parents have any concerns about the provision. All policies are made available to the parents. The group also worked on improving communications between the staff, committee and the parents. The improvement was brought about by the new committee who ensured that staff were able to attend the committee meetings to feedback any issues on the day to day care and education of the children, and the parents can if they so wish, attend committee meetings. Communications are much improved now through regular meetings and exchange of information between all bodies.

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

There are no complaints to report.

## **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):

- ensure children have free access to drinking water at all times
- update the staff's knowledge on child protection in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures
- provide opportunities for children to access a broad range of resources and equipment during free-play time
- promote children's development in their earliest years by using a framework such as the Birth to Three Matters
- ensure there are comprehensive records kept on all visitors including names, times of arrival and departure and the purpose of the visit.

### **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):

- provide opportunities for children to access a broad range of resources and equipment for child-initiated play
- ensure children have free access to the computer to extend their knowledge of information communication technology
- assess, monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education.

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