

Horsley Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101482
Inspection date	10 October 2007
Inspector	Linda Janet Witts
Setting Address	HorsleyVillage Hall, Priory Fields, Horsley, Gloucester, GL6 0PT
Telephone number	07929 974982
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Registered person	Horsley Playgroup - Village Hall site
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 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?

Horsley Playgroup has been registered since 1993. This setting is one of two sites run by the same voluntary management committee, in the village of Horsley near Nailsworth, Gloucestershire. This setting operates from Horsley Village Hall. The group is registered for 24 children aged between two and five years old. There are currently 14 children on roll, of whom 10 are funded three and four-year-olds. The group welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. The group serves the town of Nailsworth and several local villages in the area.

Playgroup facilities within the village hall include an entrance hall with toilets, a kitchen, main hall with storage cupboards and disabled toilet. The playgroup also uses the adjacent community play area, comprising of a playing field, hard surfaced area and play park, for outside play.

The playgroup is open on Mondays and Wednesdays, between 09.30 and 12.30, term-time only. A parent and toddler session is offered on Tuesday mornings.

A team of four staff are employed. The leader has Early Years Professional Status and the deputy is qualified to Level 2 in childcare and is nearing completion of Level 3. Staff are trained in first aid and Child Protection.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about good health and they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene. The staff support all children well in their quest for independent personal care. Staff talk with children about germs and the importance of good hygiene practice. Children routinely wash their hands after completing messy activities and before they undertake cooking activities or eat. They do so in bowls of water positioned at child level and these will often be shared by other children and adults. Anti-bacterial soap is provided and a pictorial display of the process of hand-washing prominently displayed, reminds children to wash their hands thoroughly, as do verbal prompts from staff. This practice does present some risk of cross-infection. In the event of a child becoming unwell or sustaining an injury, suitable procedures are followed to minimise their distress. They receive appropriate treatment, given by staff who are all trained in first aid.

Children eat well and enjoy the social experience that snack-time provides. They enjoy a variety of nutritious, healthy snacks, that include plenty of fresh fruit. The children will often prepare the snacks, for example, chopping up fruit and vegetables. Frequently, children cook food to be eaten as a snack, taken home, or shared with their parents, as celebratory meals.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills. Indoors the children move around the hall, negotiating the space between activities. They carry resources of different sizes safely and are encouraged to put on their own coats, wellies and aprons. Help is at hand should it be required. The children can practise their climbing skills on the wooden climbing frame, bounce on the indoor trampoline and use soft play building pieces in a variety of ways. Parachute games are enjoyed and aid children's co-ordination. The children work together with adults to lift the parachute up, to bounce a soft toy around or to create a dome that they excitedly run under. They further develop their co-ordination as they undertake activities such as, sand and water play. They fill bottles, pour and transfer the substances from one container to another. Children practise using scissors and learn to carry them safely. They also use tools carefully during cooking activities. Children go outdoors daily, whatever the weather. They are able to play in the adjacent community play park, playing field and hard surfaced area. They run freely across the expansive grassed area, chasing and racing one another. In the play park they can climb, slide and swing. Children, including those aged under three years, confidently climb the grassy slope to the 'hill slide'; some use the log steps, while others prefer the challenge of the slippery slope itself. Children like to be pushed on the swings and will use their legs to propel themselves as well. The children are keen to practise their balancing skills on the chain and log structure, closely supervised by an adult. They push, pedal and propel wheeled toys competently. They use hoops, balls and bean bags to practise co-ordination, throwing and catching skills. When the older children attend Tuesday sessions held at the local school they are able to develop their physical skills further, using the school's outdoor play equipment. The regular outdoor opportunities provide children with plenty of fresh air and exercise. Walks along the local bridle path and into the woods, are popular.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment. Children are brought into and collected from the hall by their parents or carers. An effective system is used to ensure that children do not leave unsupervised at collection time. Buzzer alarms alert adults to visitors. The identity of visitors is checked and a record of their attendance maintained. Children are supervised well, with closer supervision used as appropriate, to keep children safe. For example, when children use knives in food preparation and when playing outdoors. Children learn to keep themselves safe. They follow adult instructions and are reminded not to engage in actions that compromise their safety or the safety of others. For example, two children are reminded not to use the trampoline together, to avoid bumps. If children are reluctant to hold hands when walking to the park they are reminded of the importance of keeping together and the risks presented as they walk across the car park area. Regular fire drills help to familiarise children with emergency evacuation procedures. They learn about road safety when they go out for walks and through regular visits from a local road safety officer.

The hall is effectively organised and child-friendly. Equipment is set up so that children can move safely between activities and access some resources for themselves. The resources children use are of good quality and suited for their ages and different stages of development.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. All staff are trained in child protection and hold up-to-date certificates.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages enjoy their time at the playgroup and are supported well by the staff as they play and learn. All children, including those who are new to the playgroup, arrive with enthusiasm. They are familiar with the routine for the session and join in group and adult-led activities willingly. They are also able to freely choose activities from a good variety set out attractively for them. They can ask for different resources to change or extend activities, as they wish. Children are relaxed in the company of the attentive staff. They are encouraged to express themselves through careful staff questioning and genuine interest in individual conversation. Children benefit from staff knowledge of their individual needs and abilities. The youngest children's care needs are well addressed through adaptation of activity plans, to reflect the Birth to three framework and through additional support offered, as appropriate.

As a result of the sensitive care offered, children are happy and confident. Children are very independent. They make choices from all available resources and activities, are encouraged to take care of their personal care needs and assist with daily routines.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children benefit from the leader's expertise and how she shares this with other staff to enhance children's learning. Influenced by the Reggio approach the leader and staff actively encourage children to explore and develop their ideas in collaboration with other children and adults. Staff facilitate children's language development and thinking extremely well. Children are encouraged to use their own ideas and to solve problems for themselves, as they take part in both self-initiated and adult-led play

activities. Staff know instinctively when to offer children support and play an active part in children's play and when to stand back and allow children to play freely. The staff gather information from parents about children before they start at playgroup to form a basis for planning, to ensure that the activities offered are suited to children's own interests and aid their individual development. Staff continue to observe children, to track their progress, as they play and learn. Staff share their knowledge of children's individual progress, learning styles and interests using the information effectively to inform future planning. Individual Education Plans and additional support are used, when required, to ensure that all children are able to progress well. Progress records are maintained for each child and staff make them available for parents to look at when on playgroup duty.

Each area of learning receives sufficient attention and children's progress in learning is good. They develop good relationships with staff and other children in the group. They show very good levels of concentration during activities. They sit together at registration and story-time and learn to take-turns and share with others. All children are familiar with the daily routine and confidently go about their play activities, choosing what they do and extending activities as they wish.

The three and four year olds communicate with confidence. They are keen to talk in large and small groups, with both familiar and unfamiliar adults. They talk through what they are doing, make observations, ask questions and share personal experiences with others. Children benefit from opportunities to make marks, paint, draw and crayon. They can help themselves to paper and writing implements and give meaning to the marks they make. Many demonstrate increasing control as they draw, forming lines and circles. A book area is set up with cushions, an interest table and books displayed with front covers on view to aid selection. Children listen intently to stories read by adults and enjoy looking at books after snack-time, or at other times of their choosing. They turn pages carefully and show interest in the illustrations. They look at books on their own or share them with their friends. For example, three children, giggle with delight as they 'read' 'Buzz Buzz Bumble Jelly' a book that enables children to create funny characters within the story.

Children are keen to join in counting, for example, counting the number of children present, at registration. A number line is used to help children to recognise the numbers that they say. Older children are encouraged to spot deliberate mistakes in number lines and show confidence in number recognition. Children also talk about numbers as they go about their play. They discuss their different ages and one child announces, "he's coming to all my birthdays until he's 42". Practical activities are used effectively to introduce children to simple calculations and problem-solving. An example of this is when children count how many, and how many more cups and plates are required at snack time. Children use mathematical language such as, 'big', 'small', 'tall', 'long' and 'short'. They learn the shapes of everyday objects and select objects by shape, such as, when completing jigsaw puzzles or constructing. During adult-led cooking activities, children learn about the quantities of ingredients needed and talk about the concept of heavy and light as they weigh out the ingredients on balance scales.

Children have excellent opportunities to explore and investigate. A heuristic table is set up each session. At the table children can handle a range of natural resources. Sometimes children use them creatively, for example, threading leaves, popcorn and pasta. Children are fascinated when they are able to investigate how things work and to explore materials in different ways. For example, as part of the harvest topic, children investigate flour. They use a hand mill to grind corn to make flour. They feel and mark-make using flour spread over a table. They also make bread rolls to take home to eat. Outdoors children explore blossom in the local churchyard,

they kick and collect leaves in the play park and look closely at mini-beasts with magnifying glasses. They plant flowers and vegetables, water them and observe their growth. Regular walks enable children to explore the local woodland and village. Visitors to the group introduce children to the wider community and to different cultures. Visitors include a blind person and guide dog, a French person and road safety officer.

Children are physically able. They demonstrate the ability to carry out tasks such as, cutting, drawing, craft activities and threading, with increasing control. They manipulate resource pieces carefully within their fingers and many can negotiate the fastenings on dressing-up clothes and aprons unaided. For example, a three-year-old, undoes the velcro fastening on an apron, then carefully pegs it to a drying frame, holding the garment in place with one hand and using the peg in another. The child repeats this until the apron is held securely in place with five pegs. Children shape playdough, bread dough and clay effecting, as they use tools, and shape it with their fingers, or prod, knead and roll to work with it. Children also successfully pour their own drinks.

Children engage in regular art activities on a small and large scale. They combine different materials and learn different painting techniques. They engage in planned craft activities such as, making papier mâché flowers and fresh fruit bugs. Children can paint freely and can also access art-and-craft materials to produce their own creations. The three and four year olds are imaginative. They engage in role play based on their first hand experiences, for example, cooking, looking after baby and shopping. They dress up and utilise resources as props, for example, buying playdough 'cakes' and 'sweets' and rolling up paper that can be a telescope and later becomes a map to use on an adventure. Children regularly sing and hear different music. They jig to the music played to signal tidy-up time and enjoy sound games, when they explore the sounds of different musical instruments. The leader will sometimes provide a piano accompaniment and parents also share their musical skills, such as guitar playing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and their parents are very warmly welcomed into the group, as are visitors. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children and the adults respect each other. The atmosphere within the group is calm and happy. Children are well mannered and the softly spoken adults are good role models. Children are kind, considerate and thoughtful of others. For example, during a craft activity a child struggles to cut and says they need help. Another child says "I'll give you help" smiling; "I cut a little bit off for you", handing another child a piece of shiny mesh. Children of all ages sit patiently during circle-time and take turns to convey their news. Children understand the clear boundaries for behaviour within the setting. Children's self-esteem is fostered well. They are encouraged to take pride in their achievements and these are highly valued by staff. Children receive plenty of meaningful praise and encouragement.

The children are very sociable and talk happily with their friends, staff and other adults, including those unfamiliar to them. They have a strong sense of self as a family member and member of the playgroup. Children's independence is promoted. They are encouraged to try things for themselves and older children are keen to help others. They help to serve snacks, can help themselves to drinks, and select and tidy away resources for themselves.

Children's birthdays are celebrated with singing and candles. Children are encouraged to give thanks to their parents for Mothers' and Fathers' day. For example, annual Mothers' day

celebrations are held. Children send out invitations they make, to their mums asking them to come for a special lunch. The children make preparations over several days. They cook bread, vegetable soups and fruit tray bake, and make flower arrangements to decorate tables. The lunch is a sociable celebration enjoyed by all.

Children are helped to consider diversity. They see positive images of cultures, ethnicity and disability, in pictorial displays and books. Children and their parents are encouraged to join in fund raising events for those less fortunate than themselves, for example, the annual Toddle Waddle in aid of the Meningitis Trust.

There are currently no children attending who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of how they can successfully meet the needs of all children. The leader is familiar with the use of Individual Education Plans and regularly attends training workshops to develop her skills in this field of work.

Partnership with parents is good. Children's parents speak highly of the staff and playgroup provision. Parents are encouraged to visit the setting and share information about their children. The information gathered is then used to aid children's introduction to the group and to inform activity planning, so that children are offered activities that will be of interest to them. Friendly relationships between parents and staff are built up and parents are encouraged to be involved with the group. This can be through regular playgroup duties, fundraising events or social occasions. There is a parents' notice board. Here parents can find details of the committee and staffing, group policies, including the group's complaints procedure and other useful information leaflets. Parents receive regular newsletters about what is happening in the group and about any policy changes. Staff make themselves available to talk to parents and use the opportunity to share information about children's progress with parents when they are present on playgroup duty. However, some parents do not do a duty and miss out on this opportunity. Children's progress records include examples of children's work and photographs of them at play. There are dated observations and annotated and a highlighted sheets showing the developmental stepping stones achieved. These provide information about progress. A final report of where children are in their learning is prepared for parents and the child's school. This is clear and informative. Details of topics and activities planned are shared with parents, but staff do not actively encourage parents to continue children's learning at home. Feedback from parents is routinely sought and used by staff to evaluate their practice.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The playgroup leader has many years of experience, with this group. She is passionate about her role and fosters team spirit extremely well. She supports staff in their own personal development and offers guidance sensitively, so as to achieve the successful smooth-running of each session. She is committed to providing very good quality child care and enthuses the staff who work with her. The team of staff work very well together and are each clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff have good access to training and the leader utilises the individual team members' strengths to enhance the provision. Together they plan a broad range of interesting activities and experiences for children. Good use is made of indoor and outdoor facilities. Excursions into the local environment, visits to places of interest such as, farm parks, and visitors to the setting extend children's learning experiences. Staff are vigilant in their supervision of the children and help children to learn to keep themselves safe. Children are actively supported to help them to become healthy, self-assured and happy individuals. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the setting is good.

The leader is extremely well organised. She implements effective procedures for recruitment and vetting and to ensure the ongoing suitability of staff. Each session is structured to make good use of available time and to provide a balance of activities for children. High adult to child ratios are maintained and staff effectively support the children in their play and learning. Parents who do playgroup duty are helped to understand their role during the session and as a result play an active role in children's care and learning.

The staff team routinely evaluate their practice, as part of their self-evaluation. Feedback from parents and local early years professionals is welcomed. Staff act upon feedback received and are committed to further improvement of the provision.

All legally required records are clear, up-to-date and securely stored. Policies and procedures are comprehensively written and are reflected in practice. When policies are updated parents receive copies of the new policies to ensure that they are well informed. Written developmental progress records for each child are maintained. These contain some good information for parents but the links between observations, examples of work and photographs, and where children are in their learning in relation to the developmental stepping stones, may not be clear to those parents who do not receive a verbal explanation as well.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection recommendations for improvement were made. In respect of the care aspect of the provision, the group was asked to develop and implement an action plan detailing how at least half of all childcare staff will hold a level two qualification in childcare. Also, to look at ways to improve hand washing procedures before eating. In respect of the educational aspect, it was recommended that the group continue to improve the organisation of resources, so that children are able to extend more activities for themselves. Also, to ensure all staff are familiar with, and have a satisfactory understanding of curriculum planning and early learning goals, including developmental stepping stones.

The group has taken action in response to the recommendations made. Since the last inspection the leader has achieved a level three qualification in childcare and has also recently achieved Early Years Professional Status. The deputy now holds a level two qualification in childcare and is nearing completion of level three. This ensures that at least fifty percent of staff are appropriately qualified.

In respect of hand washing arrangements, the leader sought advice from the local environmental health department and looked at written information on the subject. Children routinely wash their hands with antibacterial soap and are shown how to ensure they cleanse all areas of their hands. Individual paper towels are used for hand drying. These measures are good practice. However, children use communal bowls of water for most hand washing. They do not routinely rinse their hands under running water; a method deemed to be a more effective way of minimising the risk of cross-infection.

In response to the recommendations made with regards to the provision for education, the leader has improved children's access to a wider range of resources set out at each session and has picture cards showing other resources that children can ask for from the storage shed. The leader has a very good knowledge of the Foundation stage curriculum and cascades, her knowledge to staff at team meetings and when they meet daily to reflect upon how each session

has been. The leader and deputy have undertaken training to assist them in the delivery of childcare and education and other staff receive guidance to assist them in their roles.

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 action 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.

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 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):

- give further consideration to the arrangements for hand washing, so as to effectively minimise the risk of cross-infection

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):

- consider ways to further develop the sharing of information about children's progress with parents. Also, consider how parents might be encouraged to continue children's learning at home

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