

# Catsfield Under Fives Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109396
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Alison Weaver
<b>Setting Address</b>	Catsfield Village Hall, Church Road, Catsfield, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 9DP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 893526
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Catsfield Under Fives Group
<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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Catsfield Under Fives Group opened in 1994. It operates from two rooms in a village hall in Catsfield. The group does not have access to both rooms for all sessions. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time when the group has access to the larger room and seven children when they only have access to the smaller room. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 12.30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 20 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these 11 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs four staff. The manager and one other member of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a generally clean environment. They learn about the importance of personal hygiene through everyday routines such as washing their hands before meals and after using the toilet. Children remind their friends to wash their hands before joining in a cooking activity. Staff have satisfactory hygiene practices for nappy changing including the use of disposable gloves.

There is a suitable sick child policy in place to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases in the children. The setting obtains details of each child's health and dietary needs so that they can care for the child appropriately and respect the wishes of parents. Most of the documentation used relating to accidents and medication helps keep parents informed about their child's health. There is a lack of an appropriately trained first aid member of staff at every session to ensure that they can deal with any accidents.

Children have easy access to a jug of water and to their own drinks bottles during most of the session so they can help themselves when they get thirsty. They enjoy healthy snacks such as fruit or crackers. Children are often encouraged to help prepare their own snacks. Children learn about how to look after their own health as they explore topics about their bodies. They have visits from health workers to help them understand the need to care for their teeth. Children talk together as they play about what is good to eat and what helps them grow.

Children have daily opportunities where they enjoy fresh air and exercise. They develop their gross motor skills as they use the climbing frame and trikes. They develop good co-ordination as they play outside. They experience activities such as parachute games and ribbon play. However, the lack of space at certain sessions limits children's opportunities to develop their physical skills. Their fine motor skills develop satisfactorily but this is limited by the small range of tools available to them on a daily basis.

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

The provision is inadequate.

Children are cared for in a secure environment. The staff are vigilant in ensuring that strangers do not have access to the children. However, children are put at risk through the group failing to ensure that unvetted staff do not have unsupervised access to them.

The organisation and use of the small room for the children is poor. There is insufficient space for the number of children who use it. This is a serious safety concern, as often children are unable to play freely and safely. Children play in cramped conditions and are seen climbing over toys and their friends when playing.

General safety precautions are in place such as socket covers and finger guards. Daily safety checks are carried out to help keep children safe. However, the temperature of the water in the toilet areas is too hot. Staff take measures to try to prevent children scalding themselves but these are not adequate. Regular fire drills are carried out so that staff and children know what to do in an emergency.

Children use toys and equipment that are safe and suitable for them. However, there is not always sufficient choice and variety for the children. Staff often interact well with children to

help develop children's understanding of how to stay safe. For example, they explain to the children about how to play with toys so they do not hurt each other and why they should not tip their chairs up.

Children are protected by staff who have a satisfactory understanding of child protection procedures. They are fully aware of their responsibilities to report any concerns they have about a child. This helps to promote and safeguard children's welfare.

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

The provision is inadequate.

Most children arrive happily and settle in to the group quickly. Staff welcome children and help support the new children who become upset when leaving their parent. However, at times, there are insufficient activities to interest and distract children. Children are not always well occupied and the poor behaviour of some children disrupts the play of others. This results in staff having to focus on the disruptive children rather than on the quieter children. Staff are very caring and friendly but are often unable to spend their time interacting with the children at activities to help their development and support their play. This sometimes leads to a few children playing with a lack of purpose. When staff are able to interact with the children at an activity most of them do this very effectively, using good questioning techniques. The grouping of the children is poor at times and space is not utilised sufficiently well to meet the needs of the children when using the small room.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Whilst the planning is satisfactory and covers all six areas of learning, some areas are given less emphasis. Not all staff are secure in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and what the learning intention is for different activities. This results in children not always being extended at activities. There is no key worker system in place to help ensure individual children make progress. The observation and assessment process has been inconsistent and there are very few records in place for some of the children. This results in staff not having a clear picture of what every child knows and has achieved. This lack of information means that staff cannot effectively plan appropriate activities for the next steps in individual children's learning and development. The planning often fails to show differentiation to ensure all children are challenged and moved on in their learning.

The children are generally confident and have some opportunities to develop their independence. For example, they sometimes prepare the snacks and help hand out plates. They are encouraged to see to their own personal needs such as putting on painting overalls. Children do not have many opportunities for self-selection of resources. Most children learn to share and take turns as they play. For example, they know that when the sand runs through the egg timer it is their turn to play on the computer. A few children have not developed an understanding of what is acceptable behaviour.

Children talk confidently but some are not good at listening to others and cause disruption in circle times and group activities. The children enjoy books and often sit quietly looking at them with adults and friends. They begin to learn the link between sounds and letters. They find their name cards and are able to say what the initial letter is in their name. Mark making is available but early writing is not always promoted at everyday activities and the role-play areas.

Children learn to count at registration and use mathematical games on the computer. They sort and match objects easily. Some staff help children develop and understanding of simple calculation as they play. However, children's mathematical development is not fully promoted as the number activities available are sometimes limited. Staff do not always extend children's mathematical skills at planned and everyday activities.

Children enjoy many opportunities where they explore and investigate their world. They use their senses and learn to describe what they can feel and hear. They smell different plants and essences. When playing outside they look at mini beasts together. They have fun playing in the sand and water. However, some activities are less successful as individual children do not get sufficient attention from the adult to support their learning. Children have limited daily access to different materials and tools. They show developing competence using the computer and mouse.

Children enjoy painting and like to explore the mixing of colours. However, free painting and craft activities are not readily available at every session. This limits children's opportunities to express their own ideas and imagination. The role-play area often lacks sufficient adult support to help children develop their imagination and extend their play. Several children dominate the situation and disrupt the play of others. There are insufficient opportunities for children to enjoy singing and music activities.

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

The provision is inadequate.

Staff obtain a variety of information from parents about each child by making use of the registration form. The staff then carry out an initial assessment on each child but this form is not fully used to ensure they plan effectively for the individual and meet their needs. There is a lack of a trained special needs co-ordinator in the group. This makes it difficult for staff to identify and support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children have access to some resources that help them develop a positive attitude to differences in society. They learn about different countries and festivals in their planned themes and activities.

Behaviour management is, at times, ineffective and inconsistent, particularly when the children are cooped up in the small room. A few children become very disruptive and their poor behaviour has a negative impact on the whole group. It leads to other children joining in shouting and screaming inappropriately. Staff deal with some incidents well, explaining calmly to children about why their behaviour is unacceptable. However, staff have not yet established clear and effective behaviour management strategies for some of the more challenging children. Some children behave inappropriately with the toys and resources. There are often disputes over toys. A few children fail to learn to manage their own behaviour and to learn to respect others and property. Some children are not sufficiently aware of the effects of their actions on others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Partnership with parents is inadequate. They have access to some basic information about the Foundation Stage that gives them a general outline of what children should be learning. Staff give parents suggestions of activities to do at home to extend children's learning. End of year meetings with parents and written reports help inform parents of their children's progress and achievements. However, the emphasis in the group has been to focus on the children who are leaving to go to school and not on the remaining children. So not all parents are kept well informed about children's progress, as there is no ongoing formal sharing of information. Due

to the lack of a consistent and effective assessment system for all children, there are limited records for parents to see how well their child is working towards the early learning goals.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is inadequate.

Leadership and management are inadequate. The overall organisation of the setting is weak. Space is not always used well, with the children sometimes confined into a very small room with insufficient room to play. The grouping of the children is not organised to meet their needs at all activities and sessions. Resources are not always used effectively to support children's learning. This limits children's potential to develop and make progress. The monitoring and evaluation of the nursery education provision is, at times, not very effective. As a result, staff are not clearly assessing the impact of the planning and curriculum on the children's development. Some identified improvements needed from the last inspection remain outstanding. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

There have been considerable difficulties within the group due to numerous staff changes. The committee and remaining staff have worked hard to try to keep the group operating and meet the National Standards. However, the positive steps being taken to improve the setting have not yet affected the overall operation of the group. There is a new supervisor in place and the staff team is still developing a working relationship together. They are keen, enthusiastic and well motivated to see the setting develop.

Overall, the recruitment procedures are satisfactory to help ensure staff are suitable to work with children. However, uncleared staff being left unsupervised leaves children at risk. The lack of appropriately trained first aiders and a special needs co-ordinator fails to ensure children's welfare is being promoted. The induction procedures for new staff are satisfactory. Ongoing training is encouraged but there is no appraisal system in place to ensure that staff are developing and improving their practice.

The necessary policies and procedures are in place to help guide staff in their work. The legally required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being, is in place. Most of the documentation is satisfactorily maintained.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to ensure that arrangements for identifying and assessing a child with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were implemented. The setting appointed a member of staff who was undertaking the relevant training after the last inspection. However, due to staff changes, there is now no staff member in place to undertake this role. As a result, arrangements are insufficient. The setting was also asked to improve safety with regard to the hot water in the taps. Staff take some measures to try to minimise the potential scalding hazard to children but these are insufficient.

The setting was asked to deploy staff more effectively so that children are suitably supervised at all times. Overall, this is being done apart from the concerns of the uncleared staff and a few times when staff have to be involved in domestic tasks. The setting is aware of the necessary documentation for the administration of medication to ensure that parents are aware of what a child has been given and to prevent overdosing.

At the last nursery education inspection, a number of issues were raised. Several of them were addressed after the inspection but have not been continued. The setting was asked to improve the planning to show how activities will cater for children working at different rates and to ensure clear plans for physical development were put in place. These issues are partly being met but not sufficiently to ensure children have plenty of planned opportunities to develop their gross motor skills. The overall plans do not always include differentiation to show how children working at different rates will be extended.

The setting was also asked to improve the observation and assessment process and use the information in the planning. This is currently not being done effectively as there are few records in place for the staff to use to inform the planning and identify individual children's next steps for learning. The opportunities for parents to contribute to children's assessment and receive formal feedback are limited.

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

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that all adults looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- ensure that appropriate arrangements for identifying and supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are implemented
- ensure that at least one member of staff with a current relevant first aid certificate is on the premises or on outings at all times
- create an environment that encourages good behaviour and develop effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

## The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- develop and implement an effective observation and assessment system which is used to identify the progress of all children and to inform future planning to ensure all children are working towards the early learning goals
- ensure that space and resources are used effectively to help support children in their learning (also applies to care).

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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)