

# Norristhorpe Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	311341
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Angela Margaret Ellis

<b>Setting Address</b>	United Reform Church, Lodge Lane, Norristhorpe, Liversedge, West Yorkshire, WF15 7PG
------------------------	--

<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 407755
-------------------------	--------------

<b>E-mail</b>	
---------------	--

<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Norristhorpe 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*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Norristhorpe Playgroup opened in 1972. It is managed by the Trustees of Norristhorpe Playgroup. It operates from ground floor rooms within Norristhorpe United Reform Church, close to the centre of Heckmondwike. There are shops, schools and parks within walking distance. The children are accommodated in four rooms, each organised for a different type of activity. There is an enclosed area available for outside play. The playgroup serves the local and wider community.

There are currently 73 children from two years six months to five years on roll. This includes 50 funded three and four year olds. Children attend a variety of sessions. The setting has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities or who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30 and from 13.15 until 15.45, Monday to Friday.

There are five part-time staff who work with the children. At present all the staff have a recognised early years qualification, with one new recruit on training. The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment, where they are helped and encouraged to develop good personal hygiene practices. They are supported by adults to follow hygiene routines based on good policies and procedures. These are consistently implemented by adults, in particular the monitoring of hand washing after children have been to the toilet and after handling food, before going to play with equipment. The playgroup has been rewarded for their high standards in hygiene and healthy food choices by being awarded a Gold Healthy Choice Award from the local authority.

Children learn about healthy eating because a good variety of healthy snacks is offered to the children, which they clearly enjoy. Cheese on toast, fruit and a drink of milk, juice or water were offered at the time of the inspection. Water is available at all times throughout the session both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners decide when children will have the snack and it is taken with children sitting in several small groups all at the same time. These small groups are managed effectively because there are plenty of staff and adult helpers to support children and it makes for a relaxed social time, in which children have time to enjoy their food. Staff are well informed about children's individual dietary needs and take these into account to ensure they remain healthy.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their physical development. Daily physical activity both indoors and outdoors effectively forms part of the provision to enable children to develop their gross and fine motor skills, for example, they move around the playroom confidently and show good coordination using a variety of equipment. They enjoy connecting the pieces to create a wooden train track, building models using large and small bricks, drawing and using tools with the glitter play dough. A large space is available indoors to utilise when the weather is inclement due to high winds and torrential rain. It is used well by practitioners to engage the children in physical exercise. For example, at the time of the inspection children took part in action songs and rhymes, such as Head shoulders knees and toes and Row, row, row, your boat. Most children actively joined in and those that did, clearly enjoyed the experience.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have free access to a varied range of toys and equipment; these are appropriately organised to ensure children can safely select from the range that practitioners set out for them on the table tops. Children are cared for in a suitably safe environment, where many policies and procedures are in place to protect children. Security arrangements ensure that there is no unauthorised entry by strangers or unsupervised exit by children.

Children are learning how to keep themselves safe, as staff discourage children from running indoors. Increased adult to child ratios significantly supports keeping children safe. Children learn the procedures for emergency evacuation, because procedures are practised with them.

Children are appropriately protected because sufficient staff hold a first aid qualification. Staff have a suitable understanding of child protection issues and local procedures to protect children. However, the child protection policy has not been updated in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Management has a clear understanding of vetting procedures, and employs staff who have relevant experience, knowledge and skills in caring for children.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children are confident to separate from their carer in the generally pleasant environment. Practitioners are sensitive to the transitional needs of those who are new to the playgroup or are a little unsettled because of changes of circumstances outside of playgroup. The staff understand well that children require a familiar adult and time to settle in according to their individual needs.

Children's growing independence is satisfactorily promoted throughout the setting because practitioners support and guide children's care, learning and play. For example, they are provided with a range of planned activities, some child initiated ones towards the end of a session and large group activities, such as a story or action songs and rhymes. However, some children who are not interested in joining in large group activities became restless and therefore their needs were not being purposefully met. Generally sound relationships between children and practitioners support children's confidence and self-esteem, and some children spontaneously approach staff for a hug and receive a warm caring response.

Practitioners are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and some have attended training. The framework is being used satisfactorily in the planning of activities to influence positive outcomes for children's learning.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress through the stepping stones in all areas of learning, facilitated by sound teaching. Practitioners less experienced in the delivery of the Foundation Stage are supported by experienced staff. The planning of activities and experiences provided, satisfactorily covers the six areas of learning. There are sound systems in place for assessing children's learning. However, the children's achievement files do not clearly identify how individual children are progressing through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, in order for them to use the information to identify the child's next step and plan effectively for their learning.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is nurtured appropriately. Children show satisfactory levels of independence in the routine and in self-care and they are learning to use their initiative some of the time. For example, a child was hot and so therefore made the decision to take off her jumper. At first she was unsure of how to do it, however, supported by an adult, the child was successful and pleased with the achievement. Children generally have positive relationships with each other and interact with staff and other adults, confidently initiating conversation.

Children's communication, language and literacy is developing generally well. They talk to describe what they are doing and some individual children confidently sing a rhyme to a large group. Most children enjoy listening to stories and many join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes to support their learning in large group activities. Children are keen to practise their

emergent writing skills as they freely access a basic range of mark making resources. However, there are less resources within other areas of play to enable children to practise writing for a purpose.

Practical, everyday activities are used to enable children to begin to use their knowledge of mathematics to solve simple problems. For example, they count reliably and recognise numbers. Children recognise and match shapes. They learn size and positional language in every day activities as well as on the computer, such as playing a game where they have to choose the correct colour and size of bottle to win the game.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed satisfactorily because practitioners offer a sound range of resources and activities that enable children to explore and investigate. They show an interest in computers and can complete a simple programme. They express their feelings about significant personal events in which they are sensitively supported by practitioners. Children can investigate and join construction pieces together to build, however, there are few tools and resources which enable children to develop joining techniques to shape, assemble and join some materials together.

Children explore a basic range of creative materials in a variety of ways that include drawing, imaginative role play and singing action songs and rhymes. Children use their imagination to good effect to recreate real and act out pretend experiences. However, there are few opportunities for children to express themselves with paint and explore what happens when they mix colours on a daily basis.

Children have access to regular activities that develop their physical skills both indoors and outdoors. Most children actively join in and enjoy action songs and rhymes within a large group activity, such as Head shoulders, knees and toes and the Hokey kokey. Children enjoy handling a range of small tools, such as the shape cutters with the play dough and the small hammers and tacks.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn to develop positive attitudes towards others and an understanding of diversity through a varied range of activities. These include resources which show positive images of ethnicity, culture, disability and gender. Children and their parents can share their own cultural and religious festivals with the other children at the setting and bring traditional cultural food in to share. Outings around the local community further enhance children's awareness and extend their experiences to learn about themselves and others. Visitors are invited, such as the vicar from the local church who tells stories regularly to the children.

All children have fair and equal opportunities to join in with all the activities and any stereotypical attitudes are promptly challenged. Practitioners have a sound understanding of children's individual needs. There is appropriate support in place for children who have learning difficulties and disabilities or children attending with English as an additional language. There is close liaison with parents and other support agencies at all times to ensure individual objectives are met if necessary. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children generally behave appropriately because practitioners have realistic expectations based upon the children's level of understanding. Positive interaction by most staff, with plenty of meaningful praise and encouragement, is used with the children. Good manners are reinforced

at snack time and children learn to respect each other and other living things through routines and activities. They are learning to take turns and share toys. However, there is an inconsistent approach between practitioners with how they positively manage children's behaviour.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. A notice board keeps parents suitably informed about aspects of the curriculum and events. Practitioners are available to exchange information daily with parents, which means that children are cared for according to each child's needs. Parents are welcomed and included in most aspects of the provision and they give their support to helping on the parent rota and special events, such as parties, outings and fundraising events.

Parents of children who receive nursery education funding are kept appropriately informed about what their children are learning; they can access their children's progress record at any time and practitioners are approachable so any issues can be easily discussed. However, the present systems in place for all parents to air their views about the service their child is receiving are limited. There is a system in place to record complaints and there is a complaints procedure, however, it is not up to date in line with the requirements.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's needs are satisfactorily met because sound organisation deploys adults appropriately within the areas of play to interact with children, making effective use of volunteers and students. The high adult to child ratio creates a calm ambience where children are satisfactorily supported in their care and learning.

The new manager is settling in and the priority has been developing relationships with the existing staff team and children, and settling in the new children to ensure their individual needs are being met. Knowledgeable, well qualified and experienced practitioners who understand their roles and responsibilities support new and less experienced staff.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are quite rigorous and management do ensure that any person who has not been vetted is never left alone with the children. However, at the time of the inspection there was not a system in place to record the criminal record check reference number and issue date for adults working with the children. This is a breach in regulations. The manager, supported by the management committee, ensures that all staff are effectively involved in reviewing practice and adopting new procedures.

Children benefit from established routines that ensure they can access a varied range of experiences. This includes a balance of structured as well as spontaneous activities. Creative use of space and presentation of the activities and resources enable children to initiate their own play and learning sufficiently well.

Most of the required records are available and all of the required policies and procedures to protect children, promote their well-being and support them to develop their potential are in place. Most have been updated in line with regulations.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Some practitioners are more experienced than others to deliver the Foundation Stage Curriculum and this is demonstrated in their diverse knowledge, understanding and delivery of it. Since the change in management, the systems for recording children's progress are being reviewed. Therefore

at present, children's record of achievements do not clearly record how children are progressing through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

Progress has been made since the last inspection. At the last inspection of care, the provider agreed to make improvements to the organisation of staff inductions, address maintenance of the premises issues, review the personal hygiene practices with children and review and extend some of the documentation.

There is now a clear induction procedure in place to implement with new staff to ensure they are made aware of the issues which includes details of how the setting operates, health and safety and a knowledge and understanding of the policies and procedures. The toilets have been damp proofed and refurbished providing a much more pleasant environment for the children. Hygiene practices have improved because children now have a plate to eat their snack from and they now are given wipes to clean their face and hands after eating and before going to play with toys and equipment. This procedure actively encourages effective hygiene practices and helps to prevent cross infection. The setting now use Pre-school Learning Alliance documentation to record accidents. This documentation conforms to Ofsted requirements and therefore safeguards the interests of children. There is a lost and uncollected child policy, which is to be updated to incorporate the effective new security arrangements in place to prevent unauthorised entry and unsupervised exit by children. This results in the safety precautions within the setting being more effective and enabling the provider to act in the best interest of the children.

Some progress has been made for three and four year old children in receipt of nursery education funding. At the last inspection of nursery education, the provider was asked to improve opportunities for children to explore texture, media, join and assemble and write for different purposes. The storage now enables children to access independently a wider choice of resources within the mark making area that includes amongst other things, clipboards and envelopes with a post box to post letters. However, these resources are not extended within many other areas of play. The frequency that children have independent access to explore texture, media, join and assemble continue to be areas for improvement as identified within the report to ensure that children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum within the areas of learning and progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

### **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 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 that records to verify that enhanced criminal record checks have been undertaken on staff, volunteers and students are kept on the premises and available for inspection at all times
- ensure that the child protection policy is updated in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures
- monitor and review the effectiveness of large group activities for those children who lose interest and do not wish to take part
- ensure that consistent methods of positive behaviour management are implemented by all staff
- ensure that the complaints procedure is updated in line with the requirements.

#### 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):

- clearly record how children are progressing through the stepping stones towards the Early Learning Goals and identify the next step for children's learning and use this information to inform future plans for children
- ensure that children can regularly experience painting medium and explore what happens when they mix colours
- ensure that children have regular access to make marks and write for a purpose within other areas of play
- provide regular access for children to select tools and develop techniques they need to shape, assemble and join materials
- devise a variety of systems to seek the views from parents about the service.

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)