

Hollybush Under Fives Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	409626
Inspection date	28 January 2008
Inspector	Susan Parker
Setting Address	c/o Hollybush Primary School, Fordwich Rise, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG14 2DF
Telephone number	01992 509906
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Registered person	Hollybush Under Fives Playgroup Committee
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?

Hollybush Under Fives Playgroup opened in October 1992. It is a committee run playgroup that operates from a mobile classroom in the grounds of Hollybush Primary School in Hertford. It serves the local area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 to 11.15 from Monday to Friday with Lunch Bunch from 11.30 to 13.30 or 14.55 for Hollybush Nursery children.

There are currently 12 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, two receive funding for early education.

Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language and welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are four permanent members of staff working with the children. All the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 3. The setting receives support from a teacher and are members of 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 and hygienic environment where they gain a positive understanding of good hygiene practices and are enthusiastic in developing independence in their personal care.

Children's physical, nutritional and health needs are met due to the effective procedures and practices followed by the staff. Children enjoy an excellent range of purposeful activities which contribute to their good health. For example, there are a selection of good physical activities and equipment to help children to develop control of their bodies as they run, jump, ride on wheeled toys, climb and balance. Children benefit greatly from the use of the second classroom which can house large equipment so children are not restricted by the weather.

Children are confident to try out new skills and ask for help when needed, this is a result of the staff's good understanding of each child's stage of development, thoughtful provision of resources and continual encouragement. For example, children can progress from push along bikes to bikes with pedals.

Children help themselves to easily accessible drinks and enjoy an excellent range of healthy snacks, for example fresh fruits, salad, vegetables and raisins. They benefit from these well-balanced, varied and healthy snacks which take account of their individual needs. Children are given choices and have the opportunity to prepare their own snack and choose when to have it.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, child-centred and well-organised provision where effective precautions are in place and any hazards are minimised. Children are therefore, able to move around the play areas freely and independently. Children gain a sense of responsibility as they move around the tables and equipment inside and outside without risk. They are learning about safety as they participate in road safety activities and regular fire drills.

Children make full use of the good range of equipment which is safe, attractively displayed, well maintained and suitable for the children's use. They are able to select and access the play resources easily as they are accessible to the children.

Children are very well protected by the staff team as they have a sound understanding of child protection. Staff have attended child protection training and gives top priority to children's safety and welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children actively participate in purposeful activities and clearly enjoy their time at this playgroup. They are making good progress in their learning, self-esteem and development because practitioners have a good understanding of how children learn. However, planning and baseline assessments do not reflect the abilities of children younger than three attending the playgroup.

Staff act as positive role models, and give sensitive support to all children. They demonstrate a genuine affection for children; they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Staff follow a well-planned daily routine which promotes children's feelings of security and stability. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to each other and staff.

Staff build children's confidence and vocabulary through constant praise and recognition. Staff adapt their questioning to reflect each child's stage of development and level of understanding. This helps them meet the needs of all children. The well-established and experienced staff team are suitably qualified and dedicated to the concept of providing good quality childcare and education. However, some activities result in all the children creating similar items, this does not effectively promote children's creativity and independent thinking. Staff provide and extend the activities so they can engage children's interest and provide excellent support to draw the learning from play. This promotes positive outcomes for children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good level of understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn through play. Staff purposefully draw from their prior working knowledge in addition to using regular training courses to continue to develop the group's early years curriculum. Staff meet formally as a team to share and collate ideas linked to their current topic. This forms the basis of their long term objectives. They then break their overarching theme into a weekly plan formulating a medium term overview of how they will cover their topic within the six areas of learning.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is nurtured well. Children arrive with confidence separating from their main carer with ease. They are attentive and respectful of adult and peers alike. For example, they know to be quiet and listen when someone is talking and to take turns. Children are developing their independence in dressing themselves. Their self-esteem is promoted as they take turns in being the 'Happy Helper' and choose a table top activity and have various responsibilities and rewards. Children build an awareness of phonetic links as they are encouraged to enjoy and share books. Children handle books well. They take time to look at the pictorial illustrations before turning the page to continue the story. Children have plentiful opportunities to mark make and are beginning to form recognisable letters as they practise writing their names on completed art work and on play shopping lists.

Children are developing a growing awareness of number. They regularly count, sort, match and order during daily play and routine activities. Older and more able children can calculate in practical situations, such as deciding how many chairs are needed at a table.

Children develop a sense of time and place as they become aware of the days and the weather. They are aware of the seasons and they have linked themes and look at nature. Children have access to technological toys and equipment such as a music deck, telephones and programmable toys. Children are developing an awareness of the wider world as they celebrate cultural events throughout the year, and have links with the people in the local community.

Children are agile and competent in their physical skills. They have access to an excellent range of physical equipment which promotes muscle growth, control and strength. They have daily access to a range of tools, such as various sized pens and pencils to draw, scissors to cut and shape, paint brushes and glue spreaders. They also have access to different types of construction sets. Children have exciting imaginations. They enjoy making creations using an excellent

selection of media and materials. Children regularly role play, using an excellent selection of dressing up.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs and abilities are clearly understood and respected by the adults in the playgroup. All children are welcomed and included in the setting because the staff value and respect their individuality. Their behaviour is very good. They are aware of what is expected of them, are calm, share, take turns and enjoy each other's company. The staff use effective skills to encourage and help them to develop their relationships with one another, and to maintain behaviour boundaries. Children are very receptive to the praise and encouragement that is freely given.

Children learn to value differences through sensitive discussions, stories, activities and the use of developmentally appropriate resources. Children develop warm relationships with each other and the staff team, they help and support each other, and are aware of and sensitive to the individual abilities of the other children.

The partnership with parents is good. Parent's views about their child's needs are actively sought before the child commences at the setting and throughout their time there. Parents have access to the policies and procedures which underpin the running of this playgroup. Parents are well informed of their child's achievements and progress through individual folders of children's artwork, photographs and verbal daily feedback on the children and what they have been doing. This ensures that children's care, well-being and development is greatly enhanced.

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

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Sound and detailed documentation, supportive committee and positive working relationships with the school ensure that children benefit and enjoy their time at this provision. Staff are very skilled and competent in their childcare practice. They demonstrate a real affinity with children. They use their wealth of experience and their ongoing childcare training to provide a wide range of practical and stimulating learning opportunities.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The leader has clear understanding of nursery education and is focussed on the development and achievement of all children. This ensures that the provision is effectively managed and consistently monitored to aim for improvement and promotes an inclusive environment in which every child matters. The staff have clear views and ideas for expansion and improvement to the experiences provided for the children. Staff are highly competent. They are able to draw incidental learning from the daily routine naturally. This supports the balance and coverage across all aspects of the curriculum.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the playgroup agreed to include the details of the registered body in their complaints procedure. This ensures that any complaints can be dealt with efficiently. Staff have blinds at the windows to prevent sunlight from making the environment uncomfortable for both staff and children during hot weather.

Staff have also lowered the temperature of the hot water to ensure that the copper pipes and hot water do not pose a risk to children.

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

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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 children younger than three attending the playgroup have planned activities and assessments suitable for their age and abilities, such as Birth to Three matters.

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):

- ensure that children are able to use their own imagination and creativity independently.

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