

Hardwicke Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101511
Inspection date	15 November 2007
Inspector	Zahida Hatia

Setting Address	Hardwicke Village Hall, Green Lane, Hardwicke, Gloucester, GL2 4QA
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Telephone number	01452 721115
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Registered person	Hardwicke Playgroup
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Sessional care
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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 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?

Hardwicke Playgroup, a community group, run by a voluntary management committee made up of parents, opened in 1980. It is held in the village hall on the edge of a large residential area. The village of Hardwicke is situated a few miles south of the city of Gloucester. The children who use the playgroup are representative of families in the area. The group has use of the large hall, quiet room, kitchen and cloakroom. Under close supervision, the children use part of the large playing field that leads directly from the hall.

The playgroup is open for four sessions every week during term time, from Monday to Thursday, between 09.30 and 12.00. At present there are 47 children on roll, of whom 33 are funded. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and or disabilities. There are currently no children on roll, who have English as an additional language.

Six members of staff work with the children, with four per session assisted by two parents on a rota basis. The playgroup liaises with the local primary school and receives teacher support from an Early Years development and Child Care Partnership Foundation Stage Consultant.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a well maintained environment. They stay healthy as staff follow appropriate hygiene routines to minimise the risk of cross infection. The children develop an awareness of personal care routines as they wash their hands after using the bathroom. However, they do not always wash their hands before eating snacks. The written sick children's policy ensures effective measures are in place when children are ill.

The children are beginning to develop an awareness of healthy eating as staff provide snacks that are well balanced and nutritious to aid children's growth and development. Although this has been a recent improvement it is beginning to work satisfactorily. Children are generally relaxed and happy to chat with their friends at snack times. However, as staff do not always sit with the children during snack times, opportunities to engage with children in a meaningful way are limited.

All the children have opportunities to develop their physical skills indoors, helping to develop their good health, physical development and awareness about their bodies. Children enjoy using the climbing frame and they participate in daily music and movement sessions held in an adjoining room to the hall. Outdoors, the children participate in water play in a cordoned off area of the playing field and they show good control of tools that require both fine manipulative and hand-eye coordination skills. For example, they use drainage pipes to pour water from one vessel to another. However, the group does not use the small out side play area for more physical play and therefore children miss out on opportunities for fresh air and exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff create a safe, secure and welcoming environment. They work well within the constraints of the multi-user centre. Staff are on the door at arrival and departure times. Staff register children in the main hall during the beginning of the session and are always aware of how many children are on the premises. This helps to keep children safe.

The setting is equipped with a large range of toys and equipment in good condition. For example, there are construction toys, musical instruments, construction materials and books. The large hall is divided into areas for role play, carpet games, messy activities, table activities and there is a book area. Each area is divided by chairs or wooden screens. These, together with children's own work, create an attractive environment for children to play in. Staff are vigilant in supervising children. For example, when children attempt to go outside to play they are encouraged to put on suitable clothing such as coats and Wellington boots if it is wet outside.

Doors are kept locked and staff only let children go with known parents and carers. Emergency evacuation procedures are undertaken regularly. Staff have clearly defined roles, and different exits are used so that children are familiar with the procedure, which helps to keep them safe. Children learn about particular types of safety during different times of the year. For example, children are encouraged to think about safety during 'Bon Fire' night. They are told about how fun fire work displays can be but at the same time children are told about how to keep a safe distance from fire works. They learn about this by role playing how to hold hands with adults and practise how to listen carefully to instructions.

Staff are aware of procedures relating to child protection. These are well documented in their policies. This promotes children's welfare and protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally settled in their setting. They show familiarity with their daily routines, which helps them feel secure. For example, a child explains that they will be having their snack time after they have washed their hands, then they will be playing. 'That's what we always do', the child says confidently. Children engage in a range of activities suitable to their play and development needs and they interact positively with the staff and other children. Younger children enjoy having short stories read to them. They clearly enjoy looking at books about the weather identifying different articles of clothing such as coats, gloves and hats. They join in songs, such as 'Row, row, row your boat' and scream loudly at the appropriate point.

Staff deploy themselves well to enable them to offer care and support to the children. They sit with the children as they play and they take an interest in what the children do and say. Creative opportunities are popular with the children. They make pictures of fire work displays they have seen and use different textures such as glitter and coloured foil paper to make collages for their fire works theme. A younger child is able to explore the texture of glue; she spreads the glue onto the card with a glue spreader, then uses her fingers to spread the glue. She then taps her fingers together to watch the glue stretch from finger to finger.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Practitioners have a satisfactory knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and training is planned to increase their knowledge further. Children make sound progress towards the early learning goals. They enjoy their time at the playgroup and their personal, social and emotional development is promoted through staff supporting children according to their developmental needs. The stimulating activities and experiences provided for the children cover the six areas of learning using a topic based approach. Staff observe and assess children, but they do not always play alongside them as they are sometimes involved in setting up activities. This means that opportunities to extend children's learning are sometimes missed. Although long, medium and short term planning is undertaken by the team, short term planning does not currently build on the gaps in individual children's knowledge, which means that their learning is not fully supported.

Nursery aged children leave their parents happily and choose activities to play with at the beginning of the session. Adults support children in being kind to one another by talking issues through with children as they arise.

Children regularly enjoy singing action songs. They sing and dance daily as a part of their daily routine. Children have opportunities to dance to music and enjoy using soft toys in conjunction with their favourite nursery rhymes such as, 'Row, row, row your boat' and 'Ten in a bed', counting how many teddy bears are left each time one has fallen out. Stories are read on a regular basis. Children are seen enjoying 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. They join in the refrain, 'He was still hungry', and describe the cocoon as 'fat' as they look at the pictures. Through these story sessions children are learning that print carries meaning. Mark making takes place regularly but the mark making area is not attractive enough to keep children interested for longer periods.

Children reinforce their knowledge of the weather and the days of the week at register time. They learn about the wider world through topic work, for example, exciting work on fire work safety encouraged some of the children to make rockets using boxes they painted vivid colours and sprinkled glitter for a better effect. In conjunction with the topic of fire works the staff have introduced another similar project about keeping safe during the dark evenings. This involved children talking about what they should wear when they go out in the dark and how to be seen by motorists. In this way children learn about their local environment. They also learn about safety in busy areas.

Creative activities are very popular. Children are seen concentrating intently as they make collage models. They work for long periods and communicate well with staff as they glue and stick feathers and pre-cut paper shapes onto cardboard boxes. Children show their knowledge of shapes and sizes as they describe the 'small square' they are about to glue on to their model. They proudly point to and show their models to adults.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The equal opportunities policy helps to promote anti-discriminatory practice. Children's individual needs are met through staff working closely with parents. For example, children who are new to the setting are given time to settle. Parents are invited to stay and staff work closely within their own key worker groups to get to know their children as individuals. Resources are available that represent positive images of different cultures within society. For example, books include factual ones on different religious faiths and dolls represent different ethnic groups. Children are seen pushing buggies with dolls in them, while other children dress up in non-stereotypical clothes as they engage in play activities. Children's learning about other cultures and festivals helps them to value everyone as an individual and to appreciate different traditions. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff are consistent in the ways that they promote children's positive behaviour and children are seen behaving well. Good manners are encouraged, for example, at snack times staff remind children to say, 'thank you'. Turn taking and sharing are encouraged by staff.

Children are inducted into the playgroup by visiting for a trial session. A child is seen settling happily with their parent present. Younger children who are unsettled keep comforters, such as their own toy, for reassurance. Staff hold and cuddle children, rubbing their backs and talking quietly to them, as they gradually encourage them to take part in activities.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from the good relationships and informal contact between their parents and staff. Parents are given adequate information on a daily basis about the care of their children. However, there are currently no formal systems in place to involve parents in children's learning for nursery education, such as topic work or activities they can try at home. An annual report is provided for each child that details their educational progress there is no formal procedure in place for providing parents with more regular feedback. A newsletter is produced each term that informs parents and carers about forthcoming events and topics being covered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Space is suitably organised to provide children with a balanced range of activities. Children benefit from high staff ratios, which ensures they receive individual care and attention. Most of the required documentation is maintained to meet the National Standards which ensure the safety and welfare of children.

Children are protected because staff are appointed through generally sound recruitment and selection procedures. However, procedures are not in place to monitor their on-going suitability to work with children. An initial induction procedure ensures staff are clear about the policies and how to implement these. Children benefit from a well qualified staff team who work well together. Regular support and meetings help to identify staff training needs. The management place a strong emphasis on working towards a highly skilled staff team. Staff are encouraged to attend regular training for their professional development, which contributes towards positive outcomes for children.

Leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory and contribute to the children's progress towards the early learning goals. Regular staff meetings and staff training contribute towards the professional development of staff. The play leader is aware of the issues that need to be addressed to improve the quality of nursery education that the setting offers to children. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement to provide better quality childcare. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to; extend the group's child protection policy to include action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. This has recently been updated and is now in place. The group's child protection policy indicates what action will be taken if an allegation against a member of staff or a volunteer is made.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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 snack times are organised so that children's needs are effectively met
- ensure staff and parents sign and date accident records and that parents receive a copy of the record

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 all parents have regular opportunities to receive updates about their children's progress
- ensure that staff promote children's self esteem through sensitive and appropriate interactions during play and snack times

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