

Highburton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311283
Inspection date	21 June 2007
Inspector	Hilary Mary Mckenning

Setting Address	Burton Village Hall, Northfield Lane, Kirkburton, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD8 0QT
Telephone number	01484 606065
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Registered person	Highburton Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Highburton Playgroup opened in 1996. The playgroup is run by a committee including parents. It operates from a large room in the village hall at Highburton, Huddersfield. The playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently 62 children on roll. This includes 50 children receiving nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions each week.

The playgroup opens five days each week during term time. Sessions are from 09.00 to 11.45 Monday and Tuesday and from 09.00 to 15.00 on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

There are six full-time staff and three part-time staff working with the children, seven of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children relish their time at the playgroup. They enthusiastically enjoy playing in the outdoor areas where they access rich, varied and imaginative activities. Children move with co-ordination and control as they adjust speed and change direction to avoid obstacles, for example, when playing on wheeled toys. They eagerly join in 'exercise time' as they stretch, wiggle and move to action songs and rhymes. Staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and young children clearly benefit from this. They follow their own routines and are confident within the nurturing environment.

Children are protected from illness and infection as they are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment. Older children know the importance of good personal hygiene. For example, they wash their hands frequently throughout the session, in particular after accessing the toilet, before eating and after outdoor play. Although children readily follow good practice and daily routines, the presentation of toiletries poses a risk to children. Children manage their personal needs effectively; for example, they obtain tissues to wipe their own noses. Staff hold current first aid certificates and there are clear details for the exclusion of sick children to prevent cross-infection. Arrangements for first aid and administering medication successfully meet requirements and protect children.

All children enjoy a good range of healthy snacks. They independently make their selection from a variety available. Drinks are freely available throughout the session and contribute significantly to children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle. Menus are available on the snack table for children to make their selection. Children are confident and independent as they collect strawberries they have grown and make drinks. Children are introduced to the concept of recycling and different bins are available for children to deposit items as they finish their lunch.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, welcoming environment as staff have a secure understanding of their role in keeping children safe. The staff organise space and resources well to reduce potential hazards. They place a high priority on safe supervision and assess risks effectively using regular checklists to promote children's safety and enjoyment. This enables children to move around freely and safely, indoors and outdoors.

Children are aware of procedures to follow in the event of a fire. Fire drills are held regularly, recorded and assessed in order that any problems can be discussed and rectified to maintain children's safety. Children independently select activities from a wide range of good quality toys and equipment stored in child-height furniture. The staff carefully monitor children's toys to ensure they are safe and appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Children are well protected as staff give high priority to children's welfare. This is because staff fully understand their responsibilities for protecting children. Policies and procedures are in place and follow Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children arrive enthusiastic and eager to participate in their time at the playgroup. Close and caring relationships between staff and children increase children's sense of trust and their self-esteem. Children show a strong sense of belonging. They are very happy, extremely settled and purposefully engaged throughout the session. Children's behaviour is very good and is supported sensitively by the staff's calm manner. They have a clear understanding of right from wrong, as they learn to share toys and take turns. They confidently make choices about their play, selecting resources and undertaking tasks from the broad, challenging and stimulating range available. They demonstrate good independence skills and successfully plan their own time, making decisions about what to do. They put on aprons to paint and help themselves to a broad range of quality resources.

Staff have an excellent knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the 'Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage', using this skilfully to provide high quality care and education. They plan experiences and activities that interest and motivate children. They actively encourage children to instigate play and follow their own natural curiosity. Children enjoy many pleasurable experiences. They laugh with delight and excitement as they eagerly search the garden looking for ripe strawberries ready to pick for snack time. Staff consistently respond to the children's individual needs and adapt activities to follow their ideas and suggestions. Children are encouraged and supported to extend and try out new skills. They receive high levels of support from staff, who use observations and their knowledge of the children to build on what they can do to extend activities at the child's own pace. This results in children being confident, enthusiastic learners.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff consistently provide inspiring and challenging activities that are well matched to individual children's needs and interests. Effective use is made of the rigorous assessments in order that planned activities are rich and varied. They regularly assess children's progress through the stepping stones, providing a clear picture of their progress for parents. Staff interact skilfully with children and involve them in planning activities. They make good use of open-ended questions to develop children's thinking, stimulate curiosity and encourage them to use their imagination. Planning places children at the centre of all activities that appeal to children's interests, which ensures they enjoy their learning.

Children are enthusiastic and motivated to learn through well-planned, spontaneous activities and experiences, which challenge and extend them. The entire environment is rich with natural resources to excite and stimulate children's curiosity. Children eagerly look for 'Fred the Frog' and comment that there are more snails in the compost bin. They build and design, extending their imagination and their natural creativity using a wide variety of craft materials and resources.

Children are very confident speakers and listen intently to each other when playing together and in groups. At snack time, they readily engage in conversation with each other as they compare the pictures on the place mats that reflect the topic. At group time, they discuss the day's weather as well as the day and date. Children behave very well and are sensitive to the needs of others. They manage their own behaviour well, using language to resolve conflict, encouraged and supported by skilled staff. Children have an understanding that print has a meaning. They write for a purpose as they write the story for a display and on their own work.

Children benefit from individual support to help them to recognise shapes, colours and sizes. For example, in group activities they can recognise, match and name shapes, such as 'circle', 'square' and 'triangle'. Children have good counting skills and carry out number operations throughout the day, such as when counting the number of legs on a spider.

Children are very skilful and confident when using a variety of equipment. They are very familiar with the computer as they use the controls to complete a matching game. After collecting strawberries, children confidently use a blender to make drinks, supported by staff. Overall, children make very good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children have a strong sense of belonging and feel at ease within the environment. They are warmly welcomed by staff, who are sensitive to their needs and value their individuality. Staff work closely with parents to find out what is important to children, such as special events in their lives. Children know they are valued, as staff listen attentively to what they say and ask questions about their experiences and interests. For example, they make sure they greet each child individually on arrival and talk to them about what they have been doing at home. This contributes effectively to children developing self-esteem.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children play harmoniously together, as they are aware of their own needs and show consideration for the needs of others. For example, older children assist younger children when playing on the trundle toys. Children confidently share information about themselves and listen with interest when others share their news. This is due to staff planning opportunities for them to be together in both group times and independent play. Well-planned, meaningful activities and resources help children become aware of similarities and differences, which in turn increases their understanding of the wider world. Children enjoy exploring outdoors to broaden their knowledge of the environment and nature.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. High priority is given to getting to know children and their families well. This ensures children are cared for in an environment that is sensitive to their individual needs and home routines are followed. Parents are confident in approaching staff and regularly share their views through a suggestions box and regular forums. All parents receive a wealth of detailed information within clearly written policies individual to the setting. Additional information available to parents includes a wide range of childcare and parenting reference books and leaflets. Parents and staff share daily information about the children's day. This encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning in meaningful ways. The staff actively encourage parents to share any concerns and introduce them to their clearly written policy regarding complaints.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a stimulating and inspiring environment where they can move around and explore freely. Familiar staff are always on hand to offer support and reassurance. This contributes to children feeling very secure and content in the nursery. Children's care is significantly enhanced by the exceptional organisation. Effective deployment of staff and good use of the premises promote children's well-being. The indoor and outdoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children and encourage their independence and initiative.

Children clearly benefit from the cohesive staff team, who are enthusiastic and clearly committed to self-evaluation and improvement of their practice. They share a clear understanding of good early years practice through a comprehensive induction process. A comprehensive collection of policies and procedures is in place. They are robust and fully supported by staff, parents and the committee. These are effectively used to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. All records are consistently completed and maintained to ensure confidentiality. There is a clear appraisal system in place to identify staff training needs and ensure the policies and procedures are consistently applied.

Leadership and management of the playgroup is outstanding. The manager leads a committed staff team who have a high regard for children's care, learning and welfare. The cohesive staff team are enthusiastic and clearly committed to self-evaluation and improvement of their practice. Children benefit as staff regularly access further training. For example, there is a clear training programme in place. This commitment to improvement ensures the continuing development of the educational provision. 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 provider was required to address issues regarding the complaints and compliments procedure. The provider has reviewed the documentation and there is now a clear policy in place that is available for parents.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- consider ways to further promote children's awareness of good hygiene practice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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