

Happy Faces Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254305
Inspection date	18 September 2007
Inspector	Pauline Margaret Todd

Setting Address	Blenhein Park Primary School, Lancaster Road, Sculthorpe, Fakenham, Norfolk, NR21 7PX
Telephone number	07940 990592
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Registered person	Happy Faces Playgroup
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?

Happy Faces Playgroup opened in 1996. It operates from a classroom in Blenheim Park Primary School in the village of Sculthorpe, Norfolk. It is managed by a voluntary committee, made up of parents and members of the local community. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. It is open each weekday during school term times from 09:00 to 11:45. The children have access to a secure outside play area. They are also able to use the school hall and playground.

There are currently 25 children on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from Sculthorpe and surrounding villages. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup employs four members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. Staff implement effective procedures to prevent the spread of infection. The premises and equipment are clean. Children are beginning to take responsibility for meeting their own personal care needs. They use the toilet unaided and wash their hands thoroughly afterwards, and before eating their snacks. The good use of photographs remind them of appropriate hygiene practices to follow. Children help themselves to tissues to wipe their own noses. They wear waterproof suits to keep their clothes clean when playing outside in the garden.

Children's health details and medical requirements are clearly recorded to maintain their good health. Staff follow suitable systems which enable children who are unwell to be cared for appropriately. All staff have current first aid knowledge to ensure children's well-being in the event of an accident.

Children are well nourished. They eat snacks of fruit, raisins and breadsticks which help them to learn about healthy eating. Children with special dietary requirements have their needs met appropriately because the parents have provided the setting with detailed information. Children have access to fresh drinking water at all times. However, children do not always help themselves and staff do not encourage them to drink sufficient amounts to keep them healthy, particularly when playing actively outside. Children learn about healthy living through a range of interesting activities that develop their understanding of what foods are good for them.

Children are learning to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They have a positive attitude to exercise and enjoy going outside to play in the garden. They demonstrate good control, co-ordination and spatial awareness when moving around indoors and playing outside. They confidently pedal ride-on-toys and bikes, use climbing frames and slides and walk across balancing beams and stepping stones. They have opportunities to practise running avoiding obstacles and controlling their speed when playing on the school playground or playing field. Children use malleable materials, such as playdough, with and without tools. They are developing competent manipulative skills through using scissors to cut paper and rolling pins to roll out dough. Children fulfil their own needs with regard to rest and relaxation.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in premises that are safe, secure and suitable to meet their needs. They feel relaxed and at ease because colourful examples of their work and projects they have undertaken are displayed on the walls. Staff make creative use of the space available with furniture separating areas for different activities. There is washable flooring for messy play and comfortable mats for children to take part in small scale play on the floor. There is direct access to the garden from the room which means children can move about more easily and can choose from an extended range of activities.

Children have access to a wide range of developmentally appropriate resources. These are stored in low units and containers which encourage some self-selection, for example, construction bricks, train set, musical instruments. Children use suitably sized tables and chairs which enable them to sit comfortably to undertake activities and eat together.

Children are kept safe because staff are vigilant. They remind children to be careful when picking up the nails belonging to the construction set. They sweep up the sand spilt from the sand tray. The group use detailed risk assessments and daily checklists for indoors and outside to reduce potential hazards and minimise risks. Procedures for fire safety are simple and clear. Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and roles in the event of a fire. Fire drills are practised regularly, sometimes with the school, to keep children safe.

Children are well protected because the staff have a sound working knowledge of child protection. They are able to put appropriate procedures into practice if they suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's welfare is promoted successfully because they undertake an extremely wide range of activities and play opportunities that develop their emotional, social and intellectual capabilities. For example, playdough, construction, role play, painting, sand and puzzles. They enjoy taking part in a variety of activities which are placed on the table tops by staff, for example, sponge painting, making kites. The staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to promote effectively the development of younger children attending. They use it to help them identify the next steps in their learning. Examples of their work and photographs are kept in a book to share their progress with parents. Children have good opportunities to play freely and extend their own ideas, for example, they push the dolls in the pushchairs from outside to indoors. Children respond positively to adults who are interested in what they do and say. The staff talk and listen to them and maintain good eye contact. They position themselves at the child's level to support them with their activities, for example, at the table with the play dough, outside with washing the doll's clothes.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff are enthusiastic about learning and make the activities interesting for the children. For example, by turning the role play area into a garden centre. They have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver a broad, balanced curriculum. The staff help children to feel secure and support them to learn new skills. They ask them questions which make them think, for example, 'when do we use an umbrella?' Planning is used to make sure all the early learning goals are fully covered. There are detailed plans for the activities that clearly show their purpose. However, they do not show how the basic play provision and activities can be extended to provide challenge for children that are more able. Ongoing observations are made of the children and the information transferred to their learning stories scrapbooks. Staff make very good use of resources and accommodation. The teaching helps children to focus and persist for some time, for example, threading paper through holes to make kites.

Children show a willingness to solve problems. For example, they use a long cardboard tube as a prop for the washing line, they turn puzzle pieces to make them fit. They have opportunities to talk about their home and community with staff during activities and themes. They take the lead in activities. For example, they go to the craft area and make their own collages and models from junk materials. They ask staff for assistance, for example, to use the computer.

Children interact readily with others and are confident to initiate conversations. They use language well in their imaginative play. They say 'mummy's here, quick tidy up' when playing

with the small scale play house. They recognise their own names and are learning the purpose of writing. However, they do not look at books spontaneously or talk about the pictures. Staff are not drawing their attention to words when reading stories or asking them to suggest how the story might end. Children enjoy the movement of brushes as they paint pictures at the easel and the outside fence with water.

Children undertake a wide variety of enjoyable, practical activities such as puzzles and mosaics which help them to achieve in mathematics. They count independently, for example, the number of umbrellas on the paper, the nine holes in their kite. Children see numbers in their environment on mobiles hanging from the ceiling. They find numerals to place on the fence outside. Staff use mathematical language well during the activities and everyday routines.

Children work and play in an interesting environment. They are learning to make sense of their world. They discuss the weather when pegging the dolls' clothes they have washed onto the line. Staff ask them, 'what weather will help them dry today?' They observe change over time as they plant flowers in the garden. They experience cutting, joining and building using scissors, tape, glue and a hole-punch. They learn about everyday technology as they confidently use computers. Children create their own small world environments by using the farm yard and building blocks.

Children learn through using their senses. They experience a range of textures, listen to music and taste different foods. They explore colour when using paints. Children enjoy singing familiar songs. They can select musical instruments as they wish such as rain sticks and keyboards. They use their imagination well when pretending to make cups of tea at the picnic table and when using 'small world' toys such as the train set.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have good self-esteem and confidence because the staff give them lots of praise, for example, for putting on their own boots or for their good cutting. The group liaises well with parents to ensure that children's records contain sufficient information to enable appropriate care to be given, for example, their medical needs and use of comforters. Children with additional needs are warmly welcomed into the setting and given appropriate support to promote their welfare and development.

Children are helped to develop a positive attitude to others by using play equipment which reflects positive images of race and disability. A range of festivals is celebrated. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is fostered. They play together cooperatively and share the play equipment. They have some planned opportunities to learn about themselves and the local community, for example, visitors from the neighbourhood come to talk to them about their work.

Children's well-being is promoted because of the positive relationships which are developing between staff and their parents. There is a useful exchange of information at the beginning and end of each session. Parents are welcome to stay until they feel their child is settled. There is an informative notice board in the entrance lobby. This gives them details of the provision, the planning of activities and menus for snacks. They receive a helpful leaflet which includes details of the group's practices. Parents have sufficient information about the procedures for making complaints and the process for resolving them.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents gain knowledge of the early learning goals through displays, newsletters and from reading the group's prospectus. They are kept informed of their child's progress. They contribute to their assessment record. They are involved in their child's learning through bringing in items for 'show and tell.' The staff use home link books and send activities home which the children may like to do, for example, tracing.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the setting ensures that children are well cared for by staff who are suitable to meet their needs. The staff and volunteers are able to work together well to promote children's welfare and learning. Appraisals are regularly undertaken for all staff to make sure they are given sufficient opportunities to improve their skills and identify their training and development needs.

The group's operational plan shows how staff, space and resources are used to meet children's needs. An effective key worker system helps children to settle in, ensure continuity of care and aid communication with parents. The group employs an administrator who makes sure all appropriate documentation is in place for the safe running of the provision. An efficient registration system is used to record children's attendance to keep them safe. All records are available, accessible, and stored confidentially in a lockable cupboard. The group has well-organised policies and procedures available. The group are in the process of reviewing them to make sure they meet current guidance and accurately reflect practices. There are some gaps in the procedures, particularly those relating to complaints and comments, unwanted visitors, anyone not vetted visiting the setting and induction procedures for staff. Parents can ask to see a copy of the policies but currently they are not readily available to them.

The leadership and management is good. The group is very committed to the improvement of care and education for all children. The staff team are aware of their roles and responsibilities. They are very experienced and have been working together for many years. They meet regularly to discuss the provision and to plan themes and activities. They are aware of their individual roles and responsibilities. There is an effective system for monitoring and evaluating the provision. Strengths and weaknesses have been identified. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the group agreed to develop staffs' knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and review the policies and procedures. The staff have attended child protection awareness training in order to safeguard children's welfare. The policy document is still in the process of being developed and remains a recommendation following this inspection in order to give clear guidance to staff and parents.

There were two key issues arising from the last nursery education inspection. These were to provide children with greater encouragement to make independent decisions about the activities they wish to undertake and to consider the grouping of children and provide further challenges for those that are more able. The group has made very good progress since the last inspection. They have reduced the amount of time children spend in large groups. Children now make decisions about their play and learning. They choose their own activities and whether to play indoors or outside. The planning requires development to ensure children are provided with sufficient challenges.

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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- encourage children to drink sufficient amounts of water to keep them healthy
- review the policies and procedures to ensure they reflect current practice in the setting and make them more accessible to parents.

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):

- make further use of books and stories to develop children's reading skills
- develop planning to show how activities and basic play provision can be extended to provide further challenge for more able children.

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