

# Blacklands Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY341110
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Liz Margaret Caluori
<b>Setting Address</b>	Elim Church, Elphinstone Avenue, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 2DJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 437630
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Sharon Reeve
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 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?

Blacklands Playgroup is privately owned and has been registered under the current ownership since 2006. It operates from Elim Church in Hastings and has use of two group rooms and a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 35 children, from two to five years, may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 62 children on roll including 35 who receive funding for their education. Children attend on both a full and part time basis. The playgroup is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 09:15 to 14:45 during school term time.

The playgroup employs eight members of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment and are supported to develop good personal hygiene practices. They routinely wash their hands after using the toilet and before they sit down to eat. Effective procedures are in place regarding the care of sick children and the administration of medicines. There are also first aid trained staff present each session to ensure that children can be appropriately treated in case of an accident. The setting maintains the required consent forms and written records.

Children enjoy nutritious mid-morning snacks of toast and fruit. They are also offered drinks of milk or water. Drinks are not routinely set out at other times although children are free to ask if they are thirsty. Children are given a choice of what they would like to eat but do not routinely take part in the preparation of snacks. Children and their families are very well supported to understand the importance of healthy eating. In addition to the ongoing advice of staff, the setting provides written guidance on the possible items to include in children's lunch boxes.

Children benefit greatly from very regular opportunities to take part in physical exercise. They play on ride-on toys in the large hall and are developing very good co-ordination as they pedal and steer. They also take part in dancing and movement activities. Children make very good use of the outdoor area to take part in a wide range of games. Whilst some simply like to run around with their friends, others take part in activities such as chalking or using paint brushes to paint water pictures on the concrete. Children are very well supported by staff to develop specific skills such as throwing and catching.

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

The provision is good.

Children are protected by a range of effective precautions in place within the setting. These include the use of covers in unused sockets and safety gates to restrict access to the kitchen and the stairs. The staff ratio is high and staff are vigilant in their supervision. The two play rooms used by the children are largely open plan which allows children to move around the setting safely and independently. The security arrangements are also very good as a member of staff sits at the desk to greet all parents and carers at the start and end of each session. Visitors wishing to gain entry at any other time must knock to be let in.

Appropriate procedures are in place to protect children from the risk of fire. Fire fighting equipment is fitted and emergency exits are clearly identified. Emergency evacuations are practised regularly and written records are maintained.

Children are supported to learn to keep themselves safe through topic work such as looking at road safety. They also benefit from the on-going advice and support from staff.

The manager is responsible for co-ordinating child protection issues and is very clear on her responsibilities in this role. She had attended training and is confident in identifying any potential signs and symptoms of abuse. She has all the relevant contact details to enable her to make a referral; as a result, children are effectively safeguarded.

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

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the group. They separate easily from parents and carers and enthusiastically greet the staff and their friends. Their individual emotional and care needs are very well understood by all staff and they play happily in the positive, friendly atmosphere.

Children generally all have access to the same range of activities. However, the Birth to three matters framework is effectively used to ensure that younger children receive an appropriate level of challenge. Activities set up for free play are very well resourced and are extremely appealing to the children. As a result, children are stimulated, engaged and enthusiastic.

A typical day comprises a good balance of free play and more structured activities. Routines are clear but flexible and these are well understood by the children.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum. There are very effective systems in place to assess and monitor individual children's progress. Similarly planning is clear, well organised and covers all areas of learning. Staff are positive, patient and show genuine interest in the things that children say. They employ very good strategies to engage children's interest and are skilled at building on their natural curiosity.

The activities provided are successful at sparking and maintaining children's interest. However, these are generally cleared away and replaced during the session. This practice does not sufficiently support children to independently build on skills, such as writing or maths, by having constant access to the relevant materials. Despite this, they are making good progress in all areas.

Children are developing extremely broad vocabularies and use very expressive language. They make good use of the opportunities they receive to practise writing and many are able to form recognisable letters. They also have access to a good selection of books.

Children use mathematical language, to discuss ideas such as size, shape and comparison in their free play. They count with great confidence and are well supported by staff to develop an understanding of the basic concepts of addition and subtraction.

Creatively children are also developing well. They enjoy regular opportunities to engage in imaginative role play games. They also enthusiastically express themselves during singing activities. They have a large repertoire of songs committed to memory; some are also developing the confidence to choose to perform on their own, enjoying the praise and encouragement from staff and their peers.

Children have regular access to a computer and are learning to operate a number of simple programmes. They also learn about science and nature through a variety of interesting activities. They benefit from practical experiences such as cooking and planting to re-enforce their understanding.

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

The provision is good.

The behaviour of children in the group is extremely good; they are considerate and very well-mannered. They respond very positively to the warm, friendly atmosphere. Adults act as good role models. They are good humoured, calm and consistent when dealing with the children and this helps children to relax and feel at ease when they play.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are very well supported to develop good self-esteem. They play with resources aimed at promoting positive images of people from throughout the community and the wider world. They also learn about different customs and beliefs by taking part in activities to mark a range of festivals and special days.

The group has very effective arrangements in place to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The manager acts as the co-ordinator and works with parents and other agencies to ensure that children's individual needs are fully understood and addressed.

Partnership with parents is good. Those whose children receive nursery funding are well supported to understand the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum. They are kept informed of their child's progress through planned meetings. Review meetings are also arranged with the parents of the younger children to discuss their progress against the Birth to three matters framework. All parents are greeted warmly by staff and are familiar with the procedures and routines of the setting. Children benefit greatly from these positive relationships. Parents are provided with a very good range of written information about the setting and the service offered. This includes clear guidance on the procedure to be followed should they wish to make a complaint.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting are good. A very positive relationship exists between the whole staff team and this creates a harmonious environment for the children. There are effective systems in place to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the setting.

The ratio of staff to children is generally very high in the group with a total of eight staff are employed to work with the children. This ensures that a wide range of domestic tasks, such as preparing snacks and supporting children in their toileting, can take place without impacting on children's play.

Space is generally well used to allow a wide range of activities to take place at the same time. Similarly, time is effectively managed to ensure that children are provided with a range of restful as well as more strenuous activities.

The setting has a comprehensive range of written policies and procedures in place. These are understood by all staff and are regularly updated. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Following the last inspection two actions were imposed on the setting. These related to the maintenance of written records, including the register, and the lack of an appropriate complaints

procedure. The group has been very successful in addressing both of these concerns. This contributes to the effective management of the setting.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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 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 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 providing more regular opportunities for children to be involved in the preparation and serving of snacks and drinks

#### **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):

- consider providing children with set areas in which they can focus on developing specific skills such as writing and maths.

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)