

Hall Lane Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226206
Inspection date	11 January 2008
Inspector	Susan Andrews
Setting Address	Hall Lane Methodist Church, Hall Lane, Whitwick, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 5PF
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Registered person	Community Pre-Schools
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?

Hall Lane Pre-School is part of a group of three early years settings operating under the name of Community Pre-Schools. It opened in 1996 and operates from rooms within the Hall Lane Methodist Church in a suburb of Coalville, Leicestershire. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time and it is open Monday to Friday from 09:30 until 12:00, during the school term. There are currently 30 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these 21 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four staff. All of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Leicestershire support workers, link

officers and mentor teachers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and child-orientated environment. They are able to experience a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health, such as daily exercise and fresh air, using interesting and challenging toys and equipment. For example, tricycles, a slide, balls and bean bags to throw and catch plus tunnels to clamber through, all of which help to develop children's physical skills.

Children understand the importance of washing their hands after going to the toilet or following messy play. However, although antibacterial gel is used, children wash their hands in shared bowls of water before snack time and this has potential for increasing the risk of cross-infection. Staff are good role models and consistently follow appropriate health and hygiene procedures during daily routines. For example, they wash their own hands before preparing snacks or cooking activities and they are vigilant in wiping down activity tables with antibacterial sprays before serving food. Children's medical welfare is well promoted, as a staff member holding a relevant first aid qualification, is on the premises at all times. Accident records are kept, although in some instances, they lack sufficient detail. They follow clear procedures regarding the administration of medication. As a result, staff are able to positively respond should a child become unwell or have an accident whilst in their care.

Children are well nourished and are provided with a range of healthy, nutritious snacks which promotes their growth and development. For example, a variety of fruit, such as apples and grapes are provided, as well as biscuits and yoghurt. Children have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating because they try new foods and textures and learn through a range of activities that develop children's understanding of what foods are good for them. Children choose from drinks of milk and water at set times during the session. If they are thirsty at other times, beakers and a jug of water is available. However, this is not located prominently or displayed in such a way to invite children to independently access it. Staff encourage children to take extra fluids when the weather is hot but not routinely after physical exercise, therefore, children may become thirsty and dehydrated.

Children have a range of opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise as they make good use of the enclosed outdoor area to challenge and develop their physical skills. Their balance and coordination is developing well and children ably run, jump and play freely. Indoors children have a good sense of space as they competently manoeuvre and change direction when necessary as they move to music and when involved in construction activities, such as building a train track. Children play safely and purposefully as they use a variety of tools, including crayons, pencils, scissors, rolling pins and cookie cutters to develop their fine muscle control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely in a well-organised environment, with clearly defined activity areas. Children benefit from the use of the adjacent outdoor area which is safely enclosed and available for outdoor play on a daily basis. There is sufficient indoor space between each of the activities, so that the children are able to move around comfortably, engaging in quiet and creative activities. As a result, their choice, independence and decision-making skills are promoted. Children have easy access to a varied range of safe and suitable furniture and equipment which

is in good condition and checked regularly to reduce any potential hazards. Toys and resources are plentiful, varied and reflect diversity. They are age-appropriate, provide challenge and therefore, children develop their skills, are stimulated and interested in what is available.

Children's safety is prioritised. They are well protected from the risks of accidental injury, as staff are highly safety conscious. They take positive steps to plan for emergencies and to prevent and manage accidents, for example, through the use of a range of risk assessments which are regularly reviewed and daily safety checks. Staff involve children in regular fire drills and explain road safety issues as part of planned activities and outings. This helps children develop an awareness of their own personal safety. Effective practices are in place, which actively contribute to keeping children safe and free from harm. For example, staff are extremely vigilant in the supervision of children and the security arrangements for the arrival and departure of children and their parents are extremely well-managed. Children are never left alone with people who have not been vetted or released to unauthorised adults, therefore, they remain safe and secure within the setting.

Staff have a good knowledge of child protection issues and reporting procedures. A comprehensive child protection policy is in place which is made readily available to parents and carers. However, the documentation does not currently refer to the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance although, staff are aware of it's content as they have attended additional training to update their knowledge and skills. Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and fully recognise their duty to protect the children in their care, therefore, children's welfare is safeguarded

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the setting. They are confident, independent and are developing their self-esteem. They receive lots of support and encouragement from staff which helps children to feel good about themselves. They are cared for, nurtured and cherished by keen and motivated staff, who know children well and give them lots of individual attention. Therefore, children feel secure, welcomed and valued. Children are able to approach staff with ease and form close, trusting relationships. The good organisation and physical layout provides many opportunities for the children to self-select toys and equipment, therefore, there is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities developing children's choice and spontaneity. However, lost opportunities occur for children to become increasingly independent when dealing with their physical needs. For example, when going to the toilet, washing their hands, pouring their own drinks at snack time or putting on their coats at home time.

Younger children's overall development is supported as staff have a clear understanding of how children learn. Staff are generally implementing the basic 'Birth to three matters' framework principles. They provide a range of stimulating activities and spontaneous experiences to spark children's imagination. Detailed base line assessments are not made to identify children's starting points and therefore, methods regarding observation, assessment and planning for children's initial individual development are not fully developed. Consequently, staff are unable to build on what children are interested in, or need to do next to enhance their development at this early stage.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have clear knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. They are aware of how children learn through the stepping stones, what the areas of learning include and provide a range of exciting, innovative and inspiring activities. Strategies for the planning and evaluation of the curriculum provide sufficient challenge, focus and purpose to encourage individual children's sustained learning. Staff are enthusiastic and invite children to think and predict for themselves during activities and general conversations. Children have good opportunities to self-select and therefore, there is an excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities with staff providing close support and encouragement to develop children's confidence and learning.

Children are confident in large group activities, such as the circle time and happily sing familiar songs. They listen well when staff are speaking and confidently answer any questions. Children are interested in their play and enjoy their time at the setting. They form good relationships with their peers and play well together. For example, building a train track together then working out how to build a bridge. Through effective organisation of resources and time, children have independent access to all activities and can make choices and decisions about their play. Staff manage children's behaviour well, so that they understand what is acceptable and how their behaviour affects others. Children work cooperatively with each other as they take turns, share and help to tidy away the toys, which gives them a sense of responsibility.

Children's mark-making skills are fostered with a variety of materials available on a daily basis. For example, children use the white board with markers, pencils, crayons and trace letters or numbers on the wall displays with their fingers. Children enjoy listening to stories and respond well to questions about the date and the day of the week, as they confidently predict what might come next. They have many opportunities to recognise their name, for example, children select their name cards when they arrive at the beginning of the sessions and include their name on their art-work. Labels and displays around the room and the excellent range of books, further help children to recognise that words and text have meaning. However, the seating arrangements and the positioning of the book corner is uninviting and therefore, does not effectively promote children's interest.

Children's mathematical development is encouraged on a daily basis. They are able to count confidently from one to ten and learn to count further by counting the number of children present at register time and the days of the week. They compare, sort and calculate as they use jigsaw puzzles, sing rhymes and see numbers in their environment. In their imaginative play they make comparisons, such as, 'this big engine is heavier than the little one'. Children enjoy investigating their environment as they learn how things change. For example, during cooking activities. Access to a computer or a digital camera is limited, however, children have regular opportunities to develop their information, communication and technology skills as they enjoy using programmable toys and the compact disc player, learning to operate them with skill and precision.

Children develop their physical skills and their creativity through the use of a range of art materials and tools as they paint, crayon, create collage pictures and explore tactile experiences such as play dough. Children use their imagination well to express their ideas and feelings in play situations that reflect their home and the wider community. This enhances children's self-esteem. Children remember and sing familiar songs, they listen to, dance and move with flair and exuberance to a range of music and use musical instruments to help them recognise differing tones and rhythms.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and relaxed in the setting. Staff promote equality of opportunity and ensure children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their families feel a sense of belonging and are sensitively and extremely well supported. Therefore, all children are fully involved, settle well, become more confident, learn and progress. Staff liaise closely with parents and the local school and seek advice and guidance from outside agencies so that children feel valued and their needs are met effectively. Children have access to resources, play opportunities and activities which reflect diversity and positively acknowledge differences. For example, dolls, posters, books and puzzles, are used which helps to broaden their understanding of the wider world, although the celebration of multicultural festivals is somewhat limited.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children behave well in the setting, they happily share their toys, for example, as they play with the torches they take turns willingly. Staff manage children's behaviour effectively in a positive way, by listening to them, diverting their attention and praising their achievements. They are skilled in knowing when to become involved in children's negotiations and when to hold back so the children can resolve issues for themselves. They are calm, consistent and sensitive in their approach and give clear explanations to children which helps them feel secure and know what is expected of them. Staff are polite to each other and to the children, always saying 'please' and 'thank you' and encouraging children to do the same. As a result, children behave well and harmony and cooperation is promoted. Children's self-esteem is thoroughly promoted by praise and encouragement from staff. Children's art-work is valued and displayed creatively around the play room to further enhance children's sense of belonging.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers speak favourably of the welcoming environment which helps them to feel confident in the care offered to their children. They find staff approachable, have high regard for the key worker system and feel well-informed. A full range of the setting's policy and procedural documentation is readily available for parents and carers. Staff are frequently taking steps to build positive relationships with them, sending out newsletters and arranging open evenings. Parents and carers have access to information about the six areas of learning and information is shared informally through ongoing dialogue and the parents' notice board. Folders of children's work and a profile of children's progress and development regarding the learning outcomes are provided for parents to see upon request. However, although parents can act as rota helpers, the setting does not implement successful strategies to encourage parents to be more proactive or to influence and contribute to their child's learning. For example through conducting more detailed base line assessments, a suggestion box or obtaining their views by the use of regular questionnaires. Basic information is gathered at the time a child is placed in the setting, this is constantly reviewed to ensure accuracy.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled. They are challenged, have fun and effective use is made of space, time and resources to provide a positive environment for children to play and learn. The setting operates a key worker system so that children receive a good level of support and care from keen and motivated staff. They are highly qualified and experienced in childcare and continue to develop their knowledge and skills through regular training, for example, first aid, child protection and behaviour management. Robust procedures are in place for ensuring staff

are suitable to work with children. The staff know children well, are enthusiastic and show care and concern for their welfare. This gives children a real sense of security and well-being.

Policy and procedural documentation is clear, comprehensive and used effectively to support the effective running of the setting and the promotion of children's health, safety, welfare and enjoyment. Staff are thoroughly committed and demonstrate a clear understanding of the policies and their responsibilities to ensure the requirements of the National Standards are met.

The leadership and management for nursery education is good. Staff are familiar with the six areas of learning, aware of their roles and responsibilities and share good practice. They regularly evaluate the service they provide to children and their families and embrace ongoing training opportunities. Although informal, basic systems are in place to support and monitor the competency and performance of staff and to identify their training needs. The setting is focused on the development and achievement of all children and careful planning takes place regarding children's activities to ensure they have breadth and balance. Therefore, children benefit from their experiences and the wide range of exciting and innovative learning opportunities that are provided.

Overall, children's need are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure that the child protection statement complies with Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures and guidance. The setting also agreed to ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing and ensure the system for registering children and staff attendance shows the hours of attendance. Effective procedures were also to be established with regard to checking that staff are suitable, both mentally and physically, to care for children.

The setting has taken positive steps to address all of these issues to some degree. The child protection statement has been revised in line with ACPC procedures, however, this documentation requires updating in line with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board guidance. Children's personal hygiene practices are generally appropriate after toileting and antibacterial gel is used, however, there is potential for the risk of cross-infection, as children are sharing a portable hand bowl to wash hands at snack time. Robust systems are in place to ensure staff are suitable both mentally and physically to care for children and the registered providers seek regular written confirmation from staff regarding aspects of their suitability. The times of attendance of children, staff and visitors are meticulously recorded.

Complaints since the last inspection

A complaint was received on 27/01/2006 about staff ratios, scissors being accessible to children and dirty carpets. This relates to National Standard 2, National Standard 6 and National Standard 7. It was investigated by an inspector who made an unannounced visit. No breaches of National Standards were identified, however, a recommendation was set for standard 2 to ensure the system for registering children and staff attendance shows the hours of attendance. The registered person remains qualified for registration.

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):

- ensure accident records include sufficient detail and that children's hand washing practices are revised
- devise and implement strategies to encouraging parents to be more proactive, so they may influence and contribute more fully to their child's learning. For example, through more detailed base line assessments.

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):

- create more opportunities for children to develop their self-care and social skills and to become increasingly independent when dealing with their physical needs
- revise the seating arrangements and positioning of the book corner to make it more inviting and captivate children's interest.

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