

Hall Grove Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148123
Inspection date	10 January 2008
Inspector	Jill Nugent
Setting Address	Care of Ludwick Family Club, Hall Grove, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL7 4PH
Telephone number	01707 880 890
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Registered person	The Trustees of Hall Grove Community Pre-School
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 Grove Community Pre-School registered in 1992. It operates from the Ludwick Family Club, which is part of the Hall Grove Community, in Welwyn Garden City. The pre-school is open from 09.15 to 11.45 each weekday during term time. Children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

A maximum of 25 children may attend the setting at any one time. Currently there are 29 children on roll of whom 16 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

A total of four staff work with the children. Of these, two, including the manager, hold a relevant early years qualification and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well as there are good procedures in place. All medical records are maintained appropriately and extra information is requested if children suffer from allergic conditions. Parents are quickly informed of the occurrence of any contagious illnesses so as to protect children from infection. In the event of an accident children are well taken care of as staff ensure that their first aid knowledge is up to date. They are attentive to matters of hygiene and maintain a good level of cleanliness. They encourage children to wash or wipe their hands when necessary thereby raising their awareness of good hygiene. Children have access to rolls of toilet paper so that they can learn to wipe their own noses and dispose of the tissue afterwards. These procedures contribute effectively to keeping children healthy.

Children enjoy a range of healthy snacks. These include a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables which the children help to prepare themselves. This helps them to develop an awareness of healthy eating. They enjoy the social aspect of snack time, sitting in small groups with a member of staff. Children choose food independently and pour their own drinks so as to encourage their personal independence. There is drinking water available at all times in order to prevent the risk of dehydration. Children with special diets have their needs met well as all adults are made aware. Therefore, children are well nourished.

Children have good opportunities for regular physical activity. They enjoy climbing and sliding on the indoor climbing frame during free play. During sessions in the hall they develop physical skills as they explore resources such as bats, balls, hoops and quoits or ride around on wheeled vehicles. These activities help children to develop hand eye co-ordination, control and to negotiate space. In fine weather children also have use of an outdoor area where, in winter, they have fun in snow and in summer, they enjoy the fresh air and sunshine. Consequently children keep fit and healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. The pre-school room is attractive and comfortable with many bright pictures, photographs and posters on display. Children are able to choose freely from a wide range of safe and suitable resources. The layout of the room is such that children can explore safely in a variety of learning areas. Children particularly enjoy an interesting home corner with an array of colourful dressing up clothes. They benefit from the opportunity to select extra resources when creating, modelling or participating in imaginative play. Large equipment such as the climbing frame is set out on safety matting. Staff are always on hand to remind children of safety rules so that they become aware of their own personal safety.

Children's safety and security in the setting is promoted effectively. Staff carry out an annual risk assessment and also daily safety checks. In this way potential risks are minimised through the highlighting of any concerns. Staff take particular care that radiators around the room are not hot to the touch and that all storage areas are inaccessible to children. They supervise children closely when using the toilets and halls, and also at the beginning and end of each session. Visitors to the pre-school are monitored through a bell entry system. There are adequate

fire precautions in place and children practise an evacuation plan so that they know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. They have effective procedures in place for logging any concerns about the safeguarding of children. Children arriving with a previous injury have this recorded and any adults unknown to staff must use a password if collecting children. Staff know where to seek advice if necessary. Therefore children are well protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and happy at pre-school. They enjoy very good opportunities for free play and exploration, for example, they play with toy cars on a road mat, use bricks to build models and enjoy jigsaw puzzles. Children are gaining confidence and independence as they move around selecting resources and activities. They show much interest in what is on offer and at times become quite absorbed in their play. For instance, they are curious about the various electronic toys and like to investigate how things work. They spend long periods of time creating pictures using collections of different materials. Their self-esteem is boosted as staff praise them and comment on how well they are able to do things, for instance, when drawing and cutting. In this way children are encouraged to become more involved in purposeful activities.

Children are supported in their development and learning through the interaction of staff who join in and engage children in conversation. They encourage children to communicate through asking relevant questions and talking about everyday things. Children appreciate the interest shown in them, for example, when being offered extra resources to extend their play. Young children's needs are met well through the various opportunities to explore resources in their own way. Staff offer good support, allowing children to take the lead and moving them on in their learning. However, they have not yet made use of the 'Birth to three matters' guidance to develop the planning and assessment systems for under-threes and consequently the opportunities for extending learning.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff plan the educational programme around themes ensuring a balance of activities across the six learning areas. They plan for a child-centred learning environment and show what they expect children to learn when participating in the activities. Staff are particularly adept at following up children's interests and enhance their learning through support and encouragement. They ask searching questions and reinforce children's learning through conversation. They make good use of additional small group times to focus and extend children effectively. Children's progress is observed and assessed in line with the stepping stones of learning. This enables staff to set half-termly targets for children which are used alongside evaluations of the weekly activities to guide future planning.

Children are making good progress in all areas of learning. They are confident and persist at self-chosen tasks, such as completing puzzles and making collage pictures. They soon become independent and learn to communicate their ideas to staff when seeking help. There are good opportunities for children to explore mark-making. They discover how to draw patterns and shapes and sometimes recognisable pictures, such as a house. Children learn to recognise their own names and enjoy listening to stories, although they do not always have access to a wide selection of books to encourage them to enjoy books for themselves.

Children learn to count correctly and use numbers to find things out. When helping with the daily calendar they work out what number comes next and begin to recognise the associated numerals. They are able to represent a given number using their fingers and count objects confidently. When joining in number rhymes they learn to add and subtract items. In play activities children compare different sizes and shapes. They develop basic technological skills as they construct and create three-dimensional models. They have fun playing in sand and water discovering the various properties of these materials. During themed activities children find out about the natural world and living things, such as sea creatures. This helps them to develop an understanding of the world.

Children especially enjoy the opportunity to use their own imagination in creating pictures using paint, glue and collage materials. They spend time working on their pictures, showing pleasure in the end result and talking with staff about their completed creations. They learn new creative techniques in directed activities, for instance, when making firework pictures. They discover how colours change when using icing sugar to decorate biscuits. Through using tools in various activities children develop good manipulative skills. In outdoor play with large apparatus, such as a tent and tunnel, they develop body awareness and coordination.

Overall children develop appropriate and relevant skills in a stimulating and supportive learning environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and included and develop a sense of belonging. There is a relaxed and busy atmosphere and children develop confidence with staff. They enjoy an individual welcome at registration time each day and appreciate the opportunity to sit on a member of staff's lap if they wish. They like to gather together as a group to sing songs. Their creative work is valued and children are able to display pictures in their own way. Staff are aware of children's individual needs and help new children settle in gradually. Children learn to make decisions through being offered many choices during the session, for example, selecting paper and pens. Staff promote their awareness of diversity in society through organising activities around cultural and religious festivals. In this way they learn to respect others in a wider society.

Children's behaviour is good. They are encouraged to share resources fairly. They are attentive at group times and respond positively to requests and instructions. They move in an orderly manner between the pre-school room and the halls and are happy to help out at tidy up time. Consequently, children learn to distinguish between right and wrong. There are appropriate procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff liaise with parents and other professionals in order to offer appropriate support. If necessary they make use of individual learning plans to help children progress further in their learning.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The pre-school works closely with parents and carers. Parents receive information about the policies and procedures in a small booklet and regular newsletters keep them up to date with events. Staff have friendly relationships with parents and always make them feel welcome. The partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is good. Information about the Foundation Stage of learning is available in the policy file although this is not detailed. The weekly planning is on display and parents may approach key workers at any time to exchange information about their child's progress. They complete a developmental booklet when children

start and this provides a useful baseline from which staff can work. However, staff do not share children's assessment records and targets regularly with parents so that they can be encouraged to become more involved in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The pre-school's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. The paperwork is very well organised and readily available. All the necessary policies are in place. Parents complete registration forms providing emergency contacts and necessary consents. Attendance registers are well maintained. There are sound induction and appraisal procedures in place for staff. The planning for the educational programme is kept up to date so that all staff are aware of their responsibilities. They follow a daily routine which allows children time for free choice and group activities. This provides a good framework for children's care and education.

Staff are committed to continually improving their practice. Since the previous inspection they have attended training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework, Child Protection, First Aid and Signing. Children benefit from their acquired knowledge and skills. Staff have a high regard for the well-being of all children. They are caring and supportive and maintain good adult:child ratios. They make good use of the available space to offer an interesting and attractive environment for children. They work well as a team interacting with children appropriately to build relationships and encourage learning.

Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager and deputy work closely together to provide a framework in which staff can promote learning effectively. They meet together with staff at regular intervals and monitor the provision informally in order to highlight areas for development. They have sought advice on planning and assessment and devised systems that are manageable and practical. As a result staff work together effectively in providing a good quality learning environment.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the pre-school was asked to maintain an accurate record of attendance, extend their practice to enable children to be independent and extend the range of available resources which reflect diversity. Staff now sign children in as they arrive and maintain a record of late arrivals and early leavers. They have made resources more easily accessible to children so that they have more choice. They have purchased extra resources that reflect diversity including books, dolls and puppets. This response has improved the outcomes for children.

At the previous nursery education inspection the pre-school was asked to introduce a clearer system of evaluation and extend opportunities for children to use ICT, to develop an awareness of sounds and letters, and mathematical language, and to explore colours and texture. Staff now evaluate all planned activities and have introduced a new assessment system. They increase children's awareness of letters and sounds through a phonics programme and encourage their use of mathematical language during play. Children explore colour and texture freely in the creative area and are encouraged to work independently in organised activities. These changes have contributed to children receiving an improved education overall.

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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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):

- review the planning and assessment systems in order to further improve the outcomes for children under three.

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 children have good access to a wide range of books
- develop the partnership with parents and carers to encourage their involvement in children's learning.

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