

Hugglescote Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226216
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Inspector	Susan Andrews
Setting Address	Grange Road, Hugglescote, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 2BQ
Telephone number	01530 810770
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Registered person	The Trustees of Hugglescote 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?

Hugglescote Playgroup opened in 1975. It is a committee run group and operates from a community hall with access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup is situated in the village of Hugglescote, near Coalville, in Leicestershire.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:00 until 11:30 each weekday and from 12:15 to 14:45 on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday during term time. There are currently 69 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 40 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and nearby towns and villages. The playgroup has experience of providing care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs eight staff. Including the person in charge, six staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and two staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean and hygienic premises. They develop some awareness of hygiene and their own health because the setting has activity themes and some personal care routines that support this. For example, staff explain the reasons for washing hands after children go to the toilet area and they have discussion about the importance of healthy eating, the need for fresh air and exercise. However, children use a shared bowl of water to cleanse their hands after craft activities and staff use the same bowl to rinse their hands after wiping children's noses. Consequently the risk of cross-infection is not minimised effectively.

Parental consent is obtained for any medication that needs to be administered and accidents are recorded, although in some instances, the records lack sufficient detail, regarding any follow-up checks that are made. Staff are able to respond positively should a child have an accident or become unwell whilst in their care. This is because they have current first aid training and good policy and procedural arrangements are in place.

The setting promotes healthy eating and provides children with a range of snack foods, including fresh fruit, for example, raisins, oranges and apples. Activity themes and the celebration of festivals encourages familiarity with a variety of foods and promotes good dietary health. Staff ensure they have knowledge of children's special dietary requirements and information regarding any allergies is gathered at the time a child is placed at the setting so that food is always suitable to maintain children's health. Children have a choice of water, milk or juice at snack times but do not have independent access to drinking water throughout the session or after physical exercise, therefore, there is a risk that they may become dehydrated.

Children develop physical movement and skills by taking part in a variety of outdoor activities and benefit from the fresh air and exercise. Children use large equipment and other resources to climb, slide, go through, under and balance. Their physical development for fine manipulation is progressed through their use of tools, such as glue sticks, scissors, paint brushes, rollers, chalks, pencils and crayons. They experience planned activities that provide them with challenge and encourage them to try different ways of moving, for example, by taking large strides and running quickly when playing games, such as 'What's the time Mr Wolf' and through movement to music. They negotiate each other's space well as they wheel a doll's pram or the toy lawn mowers and children display good spatial awareness as they move between activities. Children increase their ability with balance and co-ordination and they become aware of changes to their body when active, such as getting warmer and feeling their heart beat faster.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children feel welcomed into the setting, which has very well-maintained refurbished premises. The rooms are used for various community groups and therefore, the playgroup is unable to display children's art work in the large room to help make it more child-orientated and inviting. However, a small portable notice board in the lobby provides playgroup information for parents and children's work is displayed in the small play room. Children's safety and comfort is supported by an appropriate range of child-sized furniture and safe play equipment that is kept in good order. Staff use good policy and procedures to keep children safe. For example, the deployment of staff is well planned which ensures children are supervised at all times, including the toilet

areas and during outdoor play. Risk assessments are conducted to reduce potential hazards and the security arrangements, for the arrival and departure of the children to the setting, are extremely well-managed.

Children are developing an awareness of keeping themselves safe. This is because staff educate them about relative aspects and involve them in frequent fire evacuation practices. Children take an active part in helping to tidy away activities throughout the session to keep the room in an organised, safe order. The setting has a written child protection policy, procedures and contact details for relevant local agencies. However, the policy does not currently refer to the 'Local Safeguarding Children's Board' guidance. Some staff have attended additional child protection training to develop their skills and awareness. They generally have a good understanding of child protection issues and the procedures to follow if they have a concern. Staff are clear about their duty to protect children and their care and therefore, children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting as they enthusiastically participate in the wide range of stimulating and challenging activities. Young children settle well because the setting has very good arrangements for them to make visits with their parents prior to their full placement. Staff provide supportive contact and develop caring relationships with children to support their emotional needs. As a consequence, children's sense of security and well-being is increased and they become confident to explore the environment and engage in activities that support their play, learning and development. Children benefit from the systems that are in place to share information between parents and the children's key workers. This promotes continuity in their care arrangements.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is used to assess children under three years and to plan good learning and development opportunities. For example, children's key workers have sound knowledge of children's abilities, based on initial assessment using information from parents and a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, allow children to learn at their own pace. Young children begin to play happily with each other and with adults and they enjoy sensory play, art activities, listening to stories, role play and use outdoor equipment with delight.

Children's behaviour is good. They learn to share toys and equipment and take turns because staff talk to children about this and are consistent. Therefore, children know what is expected of them and are beginning to be aware of how their behaviour affects others. Staff are good role models always saying 'please' and 'thank you' to the children and expecting them to do the same in return. Activities are provided to promote co-operative play, such as taking turns when using outdoor equipment and with table games.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage guidance and demonstrate a good awareness of the six areas of learning. They know their key children well and use this knowledge to promote children's learning within planned and child-initiated play, such as number recognition in various forms being used in everyday activities. All staff have responsibility for observations, in particular their key children and have involvement in planning of the curriculum to support children's learning using the Foundation Stage guidance. However, the learning intentions for focussed activities, the use of observations

and evaluations of these activities are not sufficiently robust or effectively used to influence future planning for what individual children need to do next. This may result in some children not progressing as well as they might. Staff generally make good use of time, routines and resources to support children's learning.

Children benefit from staff questioning, for example, during story time and in their informal play, which encourages them to talk about their interests and home-life events and to express their feelings. Children's behaviour is managed well and they respond appropriately to adult requests, for example, to help sort and tidy away the toys at times throughout the session.

Children show confidence in being without their main carer and form good and trusting relationships with adults and their peers. They interact co-operatively in group activities and within their play, for example, when sitting together to sing songs they follow adult instruction very well and use improvised voices with flair and imagination. Children show good levels of concentration and involvement in activities, such as repeatedly building intricate Lego structures. However, opportunities for children to develop their confidence, levels of independence and elements of self-care are not always fostered. For example, with regard to accessing and pouring their own drinks, putting on and fastening their coats and dealing with their own personal hygiene needs.

Children start to understand that print has meaning and recognise their own name on their name cards and on artwork. They use spontaneous opportunities to make marks and write for purpose. For example, children are encouraged to write with their fingers on their paintings. Children enjoy books and show good interest in stories read by adults in large and in small groups. However, the presentation of books and the lack of a comfy designated reading area does not readily spark children's interest to self-select them. During story groups, they are able to anticipate aspects of the narrative accurately, predicting what is going to happen next to 'Clarabella' in the story, 'Smile Crocodile Smile'. More able children are developing increasing ability with phonic knowledge, for example, sounding out the first letter of their names and familiar objects in their environment.

Children sing and 'act out' songs that include numbers and use simple mathematical principles in everyday activities. For example, counting and matching items as they are put away at tidying-up time, using addition and subtraction and counting one, two, three as they start each song. Numbers are displayed and used in collage art work and children can select and name particular shapes. For example, when using a round shape for a Christmas bauble collage activity, children correctly name it as 'a circle'. Opportunities are provided that encourage children to develop positional and directional understanding and to use words and phrases, such as 'above', 'under', 'next to' and 'in front of that one'. In addition, they develop their problem solving skills as they use puzzles and contents of pasta in containers to work out space, volume and compare size.

Children enjoy investigating and examining their environment to see what things are used for, how they work or change. They examine items with a magnifying glass, check for insects, patterns on the bark of the trees and handfuls of snow as it melts. This sparks their natural curiosity and helps children to study and appreciate living things and patterns of change. They use available information technology, including programmable toys and role play items, such as a shop till, a calculator and a telephone. However, they lack opportunities to use items such as a computer or digital camera, to support their play and learning. Children can construct, form and shape things using various materials, for example, when using construction toys, collage pictures, model making from household items and when using malleable materials.

Children have a developing awareness of the wider community through activities and resources that represent diversity, of culture, gender and disability.

Children use a variety of role play settings to develop their imagination and enact their life experiences, for example, pegging out 'washing' in the garden, dressing-up as 'Bob the Builder', pretending to 'prepare food' and 'make a shopping list' in the home corner. They enjoy music and explore different sounds and ways to express themselves through dance and movement to a variety of classical, popular and multicultural music. Use of various materials such as paint, models, collages and malleable materials encourages children to be creative and to investigate, using all their senses.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are welcoming and friendly and they provide a relaxed environment for children and parents. Relationships between staff, parents and children are very good with ample time made available to talk and exchange information. This helps to promote continuity of care for the children. Parents are kept well informed through various types of written documents, for example, a prospectus, written policies, newsletters and various displayed details. A written complaints procedure and the availability of a suggestion box and daily information displayed on the notice board about activities and events, encourage parents to feel confident in the good quality of care, welfare and education offered to their children.

Children are respected and valued as individuals and their inclusion is effectively supported by staff. For example, by developing children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures and abilities, including children's awareness of Makaton sign language. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are valued, supported and participate fully in the setting's activities. The staff work in partnership with parents and relevant agencies in order to meet children's individual developmental needs. Diversity is promoted and children develop awareness and familiarity through access to a good range of play materials and pictorial images that promote positive images. For example, a multicultural welcome poster, dolls, books and the celebration of festivals. Children are very well behaved and have sound awareness of adult expectations who take time to talk to children about suitable behaviour, for example, reminding them to share and take turns during group activities and outdoor play. Children become confident and willing to try new experiences because staff regularly praise them for their efforts and involvement in activities, saying such things as 'well done' and 'good listening'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive written information from the setting that includes information on the Foundation Stage. Newsletters provide useful information on events and current matters and there is a range of displayed information about the activity programme. The effective partnership with parents contributes to the children's development, learning and well-being. Aspects of their development are discussed and information is gathered from the parents when the child begins placement at the setting, enabling staff to have a base-line assessment for planning. The staff welcome informal contact with parents at the beginning and end of the session. They share information about the children's activities and achievements on a regular basis and parents are able to view their child's development file at any time. There are opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's care and learning, for example, by participating as a parent helper.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Well-organised deployment of staff provides children with stable levels of care. For example, there are more than the required number of adults present, which allows them to help each other during group activities such as circle time and to support children individually. This encourages children to feel valued and secure. There are suitable numbers of staff with childcare qualifications and relevant training, such as first aid, to support the care and well-being of children. Adults working with children undergo vetting procedures and effective strategies are in place to ensure unauthorised persons such as visitors are never left alone with children. The setting has a detailed set of policies, which are accessible to parents and these are designed to keep children healthy and maintain their well-being, including procedures for lost or uncollected children, child protection, equality of opportunity and behaviour management.

Leadership and management is good. The staff have an overview of the planning for the nursery education, which supports children's learning and development. There are sufficient systems to evaluate and monitor the use of the Foundation Stage guidance and service delivery. For example, advice from the local authority mentor teacher, area Senco and link officers are acted upon. The setting has a committed, enthusiastic and well-motivated team of staff. Regular meetings are held to discuss ongoing practice, daily issues, planning and children's development. Although formal induction and appraisal systems are not in place, staff embrace relevant training opportunities to continue their professional development. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to ensure they had procedures in place, to be followed in the event of a child being lost.

The setting has taken positive steps to address this issue. A written procedure has been devised which is familiar to all staff and is made readily available to parents.

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.

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 fresh drinking water is available to children at all times and take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection in respect to children's hand washing facilities
- ensure strategies are in place to ensure staff have appropriate induction training, and that steps are taken to evaluate staff's ongoing suitability and competency as part of a more formalised appraisal system.

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):

- encourage children to be confident, independent and develop their self-care skills with regard to accessing and pouring their own drinks, putting on and fastening their coats and dealing with their own personal hygiene needs
- ensure the learning intentions for focussed activities, the use of observations and evaluations of these activities are sufficiently robust and effectively used, to influence future planning for what individual children need to do next.

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