

Harold Wood Methodist Church Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	118541
Inspection date	17 October 2007
Inspector	Deborah Ann Benn
Setting Address	The Drive, Harold Wood, Romford, Essex, RM3 0DU
Telephone number	01708 342420 or 01708 340367
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Registered person	Harold Wood Methodist Church Pre-School 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 satisfactory. 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?

Harold Wood Methodist Church Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1978. It is closely linked to Harold Wood Methodist Church and the playgroup has a Christian ethos, no priority is given to children from Christian families and all members of the community are welcome. The management committee is the provider of day care with a suitably qualified manager in day to day charge. The playgroup operates from rooms in the church hall premises. The two playrooms are interlinked and the group also have use of the top hall and a fully enclosed outside area. The premises are situated in a residential area in Harold Wood in the London borough of Havering

A maximum of 32 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday, term time only, from 09:00 to 12:00 and Wednesday and Thursday afternoons from 12:00 to 15:00.

There are currently 55 children aged from two years six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 receive funding for early education. The playgroup mainly provides for children in the local area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs 10 members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and safe environment which promotes their well-being. Good routines and appropriate systems are in place to ensure that a good standard of hygiene is maintained. The employment of a contract cleaning firm to keep the areas used by the children clean, demonstrates the commitment of the management committee to children's health. Children understand that they need to clean their hands before eating and use cleansing gel appropriately. The majority of staff hold current first aid certificates and all have a working knowledge of first aid. Ongoing training opportunities ensure that skills are updated. Children's medical and dietary needs are recorded and provided for. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children's health and well-being is protected. Good systems are in place to record the administration of first aid and medication and to ensure that parents are kept well informed supporting consistency of care.

The well planned 'rolling snack table' system means that children are able to choose when to have their snack and that it is a social time where they can make choices supported by staff who encourage conversation. The wide and varied menu provides children with opportunities to try different foods and tastes. Children enjoy a variety of fruit, yogurt, cereal and toast on a regular basis as well as experiencing food from different cultures to support their learning. Children have access to a choice of water and fruit drinks throughout the session.

Children's physical development is well supported, they have frequent use of the outdoor area to play freely in the fresh air. Children learn to move their bodies with control and purpose through well planned music and movement sessions and games. They readily recognise the effect that exercise has on their bodies talking with staff about being able to feel their hearts beating faster and feeling warm. Children use small tools, brushes, pencils and the computer mouse with accuracy and skill.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Very good use of space provides children with an interesting and child centred environment with a wide range of accessible activities. The fully enclosed garden, with a substantial safety-surfaced area as well as a lawn, provides a safe space that can be used throughout the year which staff have begun to develop. Children are able to free-flow between the two ground floor play rooms and are taken in small groups to take part in physical activities and games in the large hall. Low-level furniture and floor resources enable children to access activities easily. A quiet area with soft cushions and a wide range of books is well used to give children somewhere to rest and explore books alone or with a staff member. However, although the garden area is accessible to one of the playrooms, children cannot easily free-flow in and out of doors due to the current furniture layout.

Toys and play resources are age appropriate, clean and of good quality. Appropriate systems are in place to ensure that equipment is checked and cleaned regularly.

Children's welfare is appropriately safeguarded. All adults who have contact with the children have been vetted and any visitors to the group and volunteers who are under the age of 16 are never left unsupervised. Staff and students are provided with induction which includes awareness of child protection and of the need to pass on any concerns to the senior staff member. The manager, deputy and chair of the committee have a sound understanding of how to make a referral and of the need to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed and confidentiality appropriately maintained.

However, there is a risk that lack of detail in the daily register could hinder an investigation by child protection officers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup, they interact happily with staff and each other and take pleasure in their activities; they enthusiastically make choices and participate in activities both adult led and child initiated. Children enjoy listening to stories in small groups, they are well engaged and take a real interest in the story. Staff encourage children's participation through good open questioning and confident use of facial and vocal expression. Children have frequent opportunity to explore different textures and express themselves through art, craft, music and movement. Children show awe and wonder as they watch the colours of tissue paper change when glued together.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and are clear on the learning intentions of activities. They plan activities thoughtfully and with an awareness of children's individual stage of development. Children are well supported to take part and staff skilfully challenge children's thinking, helping them to learn as they play. Well planned activities help children to learn through play. Children are learning to form letters through tactile activities such as drawing shapes in both wet and dry sand as well as attempting to mark make. Staff support children to link sounds and letters, giving children initial sounds and older children recognise their own name and many can state what letter their name starts with. Children use positional and mathematical language naturally to compare size and space. They recognise numerals readily when talking about the date and confidently count the number of children present. Older children are able to work out how many coins they have left when 'paying' for an item in the 'florist shop'. Children use their imagination, expressing themselves as they respond to music, create designs with paint and construction kits and making up scenarios as they play at 'picnics'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children's individuality is recognised, celebrated and planned for. The effective key-worker system means that staff know the children well and are able to adapt activities to ensure that all children are able to participate. The use of small groups means that children are kept fully engaged and are also confident to express their own thoughts and ideas. Resources and activities are used effectively

to help children learn about their own and different cultures. Christian festivals are celebrated with support from the church, such as Harvest and Christmas. Other world religions are also acknowledged, for example, children learn about Chinese New Year and Eid. Music, craft, food and stories are used to help children understand and relate to different cultures. Children learning English as an additional language are appropriately supported. Staff work closely with parents to find out key words and introduce the use of pictures and basic signs to support language and promote understanding.

Appropriate systems are in place to support children with special needs and ensure that children's individual needs are provided for. Staff work closely with parents, the local authority and local health care professionals to provide best care. Children's behaviour is very good, staff are very aware of the children in their care and keep them happily and constructively occupied, thereby reducing boredom and frustration. Staff's awareness of children's differing concentration spans is used to plan the sessions, giving children an interesting time which meets their needs and keeps them involved. Staff are good role models, they speak to children with appropriate affection, patience and warmth and are actively engaged with them at all times. Staff use positive language and specific praise and thanks which builds children's self-esteem as well as helping them to understand clearly what is expected of them and what they have done well. This is backed up by the use of stickers and certificates for individual achievements on a daily basis.

Parents receive helpful information in the welcome pack which offers practical guidance and support regarding how to help their child settle and acknowledges the emotional distress that can be caused if the separation is not handled sensitively. Parents input is valued and all parents complete a parent assessment check-list when their child commences at the group which is used to help form a base-line for ongoing assessments of children's progress.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents of children who are receiving funded nursery education attend a meeting where they are informed about the Foundation Stage of learning and are able to ask questions about the curriculum and activities. Parents are able to access their child's file and speak with their child's key-worker or the manager at short notice at the end of any session. They also receive a written report and are invited to attend an individual meeting with their child's key-worker termly to keep them well informed of their child's progress on the stepping stones toward the early learning goals. Next steps are discussed together and used as a basis for forward planning, parents are also given ideas as to how they can extend their child's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Activities, resources and space are well organised, providing children with an interesting and varied time. The key-worker system is well managed and together with clear staff rotas and a high adult to child ratio, ensures that children are consistently well supervised.

However, the registration system does not record children's times of arrival and departure and therefore is not fully accurate. This is a breach of regulation.

Staff employment and induction is taken very seriously and appropriate systems are in place to ensure that staff are suitable for the post and understand their role and responsibility. All adults who have contact with children are appropriately vetted.

The setting has kept Ofsted informed of the change of manager but there is not an efficient system in place for ensuring that Ofsted are kept informed about the change of committee members.

Leadership and management of nursery education is good. Regular staff supervision and annual appraisals are used effectively to identify training needs and monitor the way in which staff interact with children and the Foundation Stage curriculum is presented. All staff are actively involved in planning and specifically adapt themes and topics with an awareness of their key-children's stages of development. Observations are used to evidence children's achievements, and how they are progressing, although these are not readily cross referenced to the stepping stones toward the early learning goals. Staff use these to develop planning as to how children can be supported to move on to the next step and are very aware of each child's stage of development and understanding.

All required records are maintained and appropriately stored with an awareness of confidentiality. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection a number of recommendations were made to improve practice. The setting has satisfactorily achieved these.

Children have daily access to a range of toys and resources, such as dolls, figures, books, posters and dressing up clothes which reflect the wider world. They also learn about different cultures and faiths through activities such as food tasting and music. This helps children to learn respect of others and promotes anti-discriminatory attitudes.

There is a clear complaints procedure which includes how to contact Ofsted as the regulator, which is given to all parents as part of the welcome pack and is also available at any time from the playgroup. This provides parents with appropriate information and support to reach a swift conclusion to any disagreement.

The child protection procedure has been updated and includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. This ensures that children are appropriately safeguarded in the event of concerns being raised.

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):

- improve the system for keeping Ofsted fully informed of all management committee changes
- improve the system for registration to ensure that it accurately reflects when children and adults are present

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):

- further develop the use of assessments and observations to more clearly link evidence of children's progress with the stepping stones toward the early learning goals

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