

Hollingbourne Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127254
Inspection date	15 February 2008
Inspector	Susan Jennifer Scott

Setting Address	Cardwell Pavillion, Greenway Court Road, Hollingbourne, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1QD
Telephone number	07864 065753
E-mail	
Registered person	Hollingbourne 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hollingbourne Pre-school Playgroup was registered in 1990. It operates from the local community hall on the rural outskirts of Hollingbourne, near Maidstone. The single storey building is used solely by the group whilst in operation. Children use the main hall and have access to two separate toilets and the adjacent field. Staff have access to a separate kitchen.

The group operates Monday to Friday from 09:10 until 12:10, term time only. The pre-school is registered for up to 20 children between two and five years. There are currently 18 children on role of which 13 are in receipt of funded nursery education. There are no children attending with Learning difficulties or disabilities and no children with English as an additional language.

There are currently five members of staff; three of these hold relevant qualifications in childcare and education up to Level 2 or 3. Another staff is currently working towards gaining a qualification.

The pre-school receive support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a clean and tidy environment where there are routines to ensure toys, resources and equipment are clean and hygienic. Children benefit from clear routines and activities that enable them to learn the importance of good hygiene and healthy living. For example, children's understanding of hygiene is secure as they know they should wear aprons for painting and independently wash their hands after this, and other, activities. One staff holds a current first aid certificate and the pre-school have arranged for another adult helper to attend so that they are able to administer first aid during every session. This ensures children's welfare in the event of an accident when parents and emergency contacts are not available. The policy on sickness provides additional safeguards for children by helping to prevent their exposure to infection.

Children benefit from good choices of healthy food and drink at snack and times when they enjoy a variety of foods, such as fruit or cheese. They enjoy the social opportunities offered to them at the snack bar when they can help themselves to food which parents contribute and pour a drink of milk or water for themselves. They sit at the small table which encourages good conversations with other children and staff and reinforces their understanding of healthy eating habits. Children are able to pour water whenever they feel thirsty which encourages them to develop their independence. Staff use clear systems to ensure that all food and drink complies with parental instructions and children's preferences.

Children explore some play and learning opportunities in the locality and the outdoor environment is used to support children's physical development. This provides them with access to fresh air and physical play on a frequent and regular basis. However, children's opportunities to use a good variety of equipment which promotes differing types of physical play during the sessions are limited and there are some occasions when children are not fully engaged. For example, children use the small bikes to practise riding up and down a length of the car park but there is no extension of the activity and they soon tire of this.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happily and settle well at this welcoming setting. They feel a sense of belonging from the coat rack with named pegs provided and benefit from using the cosy environment with plenty of pictures, labels and displays of their work. For instance, the three little pigs display and the choice board which show that staff value and encourage children's contributions. Resources are used to present children with choices which supports their needs, for example, there is a system to ensure two resources are chosen by children each session. Children have safe access to a range of toys and resources appropriate for their age and stage of development. Toys and resources are regularly cleaned and checked to ensure they are suitable for children to use.

Children benefit from good security of the premises which ensures they are unable to leave the premises without a suitable adult. Staff are vigilant at all times and children learn about the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency as evacuations are practised. However, the frequency of these evacuations does not ensure all children experience these soon after starting at the setting, to keep them safe. One emergency exit door has a gate across it to prevent access to outside by children but this represents a hazard should this exit be needed

in an emergency. Children enjoy their play in a secure environment where regular risk assessments, indoors and outdoors, support many aspects of their safety. For example, the outdoor area is used safely with cones marking the limit of children's access. A new outdoor play area is planned for construction soon. Staff interaction helps develop children's awareness of safety within the setting. Outings are planned carefully to ensure staff ratios are sufficient and emergencies are covered; for example, by taking a mobile phone and emergency supplies. Staff have an understanding of the procedures to be followed if they have concerns about child protection issues. This safeguards children's welfare in the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children who attend the setting feel relaxed and secure. They learn from a varied range of planned activities and interesting resources which provide balance and challenge. Children enjoy relaxed relationships with the staff who have good conversations with them. The organisation of the sessions is appropriate, providing a good balance of individual choices, small group and whole group activities, although there are times when children's participation lacks direction. For example, children occasionally move between activities, such as role play, without extending their skills and interest.

Staff ask parents to complete entry profile on their child and from this they ascertain the development of each child. Although staff are referring to the Birth to three matters framework this entry record outlines inappropriate expectations which leads to difficulties when planning for the next steps for each child. Children readily participate in whole group times when staff gather them together and ask open ended questions, encouraging them to talk about their experiences and ideas. This helps staff get to know and understand the children and enables children to build their confidence and self esteem.

Children enjoy a variety of activities with staff guidance which develops their confidence to try new activities. They concentrate well whilst sharing books and are able to relax and chat to friends when making craft items. Children make progress because the staff develop supportive and caring relationships which increases their sense of trust and helps them develop a strong sense of self.

Nursery education

Teaching and Learning is satisfactory. Staff have an understanding of the Foundation Stage and provide a balanced curriculum offering children a range of experiences that supports their development. This supports the inclusion of all children although some play activities do not fully challenge children, limiting the time they participate in some activities. The staff complete accurate observations of children but the initial assessments of children do not enable them to plan for their progress as these are based on the early learning goals and not the appropriate stepping stones. This makes it difficult for them to adapt activities to suit children who learn at different rates or who have particular needs. Children benefit from daily contact records which note observations and assessments made by staff and which parents can respond to. This enables a shared approach to developing children's skills and learning. There are also clear observations of children's development made in their files although there is not yet a system to cross reference these to the daily contact books.

Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They are encouraged to help tidy away resources they use and confidently take themselves to the toilet,

developing a sense of responsibility and independence. The staff encourage children to discuss their experiences during activities, which enables them to develop their confidence and articulate their preferences and ideas. Children's communication skills are developed as they are encouraged to find their own name at snack time or when placing their work to be taken home. Children can practise mark making and are building on their recognition of print, such as when they use the menu cards in the home corner. Children enjoy reading and listening to stories and sharing books with their friends.

Children participate in mathematical activities. They benefit from staff support when using their mathematical skills, developing their familiarity with counting and numbers. For example, children use the number cards to discuss how many of them can use resources and staff sometimes encourage them to identify other numerals displayed. Children have access to an attractive natural environment when they play outside and they receive staff support to extend their understanding of nature through activities. Children also respond with interest and enthusiasm when exploring whether materials sink or float. For example, they enjoy predicting what will happen to the ice cubes in the water. Children benefit from opportunities to build upon their understanding of health, using menu cards and other resources which support a healthy lifestyle.

Children enjoy singing action songs and enthusiastically suggest various songs to perform, such as five speckled frogs. They enjoy a weekly music session taken by a specialist and frequently use the role play area. Children create vegetable prints experimenting with paints to create pictures which they take home. Children's fine motor skills are developing appropriately because they benefit from using a selection of varied sizes of pencils, crayons, glue sticks and paintbrushes in everyday activities. There are some opportunities for them to use scissors, though these are not always at hand. However, children enjoy scrunching up tissue to decorate their valentine cards and participate in a regular action songs, learning to move in time with music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are encouraged to feel good about themselves and learn to show respect for others. They mostly play happily together, responding confidently to familiar adults during activities. They bring small items from home that are displayed on the interest table, helping to forge links with their homes and develop a sense of belonging. Children have access to a good range of resources that help them understand diversity in our society. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave well during the sessions, this is reinforced by staff providing clear boundaries and acting as good role models. For example, a staff always address children by their name and say 'may I?' when asking them to do tasks. Staff use appropriate management strategies, helping children to respond positively so they can share and take turns together. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities receive additional help and support, utilising partnerships with parents and outside agencies to provide continuity of care for the children.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory and the very positive relationships contribute to the children's wellbeing during their time at the pre-school. The staff have a relaxed approach and chat easily to parents when they collect their children. Staff know the children well, which helps children settle easily. Children's development is monitored, starting with written information that parents are asked to record before their children first start to attend and through discussion

with their parents. However, there is not a secure system to ensure parent's information is used as a starting point for assessment, enabling them to be fully involved in their child's learning. The notice board has helpful information and parents are welcome to serve on the management committee.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All the staff working in the setting have been checked and those who are not fully checked are not left unsupervised with children. Children benefit from the support of staff who are updating and increasing their skills and knowledge through attending courses and workshops. However, the group have had to make arrangements for a qualified first aider to be on duty each session to ensure that children are fully safeguarded.

Children benefit from the combined knowledge in the staff team. They are making good progress due to the re-organisation of space, activities and resources. For example, there are clear plans for activities including adult led and child initiated play. Although, there is frequent physical play when they can use the large and varied outside space, the plans do not extend challenges to all children. There are also some issues to address concerning safety, such as increasing the frequency of the emergency evacuation practices and ensuring all fire escapes comply with fire regulations.

Children's welfare is promoted through the use of clear and informative records, for example, there are accurate registers for children, staff and visitors and reliable accident and medication records available. Policies and procedures are well thought through and help to keep children healthy and support their learning. The documentation is clear and organised although there are some omissions, such as recording the times of arrival and departure of children. This results in an unreliable record if an emergency or query arises.

Management and Leadership is satisfactory. Staff are enthusiastic about their work in the setting and keen to develop the provision further. This results in benefits to the children as staff attend training courses and develop their ideas to improve the facilities and are building good practice. Staff work as a team, they are aware of their roles and responsibilities, thus providing support for the children.

Appropriate measures are in place to develop and improve the provision. For example, the supervisor and staff monitor and evaluate to identify improvements which ensure ongoing quality of the provision. For example, activities are evaluated on a regular basis to consider improvements and whether children derive benefits from them. The management committee is very supportive of the setting and provides expertise and ongoing help. The group have developed secure systems for interviewing, assessing and employing new staff.

Improvements since the last inspection

Children now benefit from staff who have developed their knowledge and skills through a variety of formal training. The resources, procedures and equipment encourage children's independence. The information on individual children has been extended to ensure the appropriate care can be given.

All the policies and procedures have been reviewed and re-organised and are easily accessible to all parents at all times. This includes the child protection procedures which staff have updated to include allegations made against staff. Children are also protected from the very hot radiators.

The staff have successfully addressed the actions set for them at the previous inspection. Children now benefit from a safer environment where staff have conducted risk assessments on safety issues. There is a clear operational plan in accordance with the national standards.

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 can be seen 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 emergency procedures to ensure these are sufficient and safe
- ensure there are challenges planned to extend the interests of all children (also applies to care)

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):

- plan a variety of physical activities so that they challenge and stimulate all children (also applies to care)
- devise a clear system to observe and assess children's development on entry appropriately and to note the next steps planned for their learning (also applies to care)
- devise a system to ensure all parents have regular opportunities to contribute to and consult over children's development records (also applies to care)

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