

# Hamdon Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 143133

**Inspection date** 10 October 2007

**Inspector** Bridget Copson

**Setting Address** Under the United Reformed Church, North Street, Stoke-sub-Hamdon,  
Somerset, TA14 6QP

**Telephone number** 01935823038

**E-mail**

**Registered person** Hamdon 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](http://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?

The Hamdon Playgroup opened in 2000 and operates from the basement of the United Reform Church in Stoke Sub Hamdon, Somerset. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open Monday to Thursday from 09.00 to 12:00, during term time only and on Fridays during the Summer term. Children do not have access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 19 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education.

The playgroup is run by a parent committee which employs six members of staff, some of whom either hold or are working towards an appropriate early years qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted through appropriate systems implemented by staff to prevent the spread of infection. For example, disinfecting table tops before snack times, staff hand washing routines, daily cleaning rotas and washing toys in the holidays. However, the nappy changing mat is in poor condition and the microwave has not been cleaned for a long time. As a result, this equipment does not further promote an hygienic environment for children. Children wash their own hands at appropriate times and use paper hand towels to dry them. This supports them in developing good personal hygiene.

Children enjoy a nutritious range of snacks at break times with drinks of water or milk. For example, many different fresh fruits, chopped salad vegetables, breadsticks and cheese. They also have water available to them at other times, if they ask when thirsty. Children all sit together to make the event sociable and to promote good eating habits. Children benefit from daily physical play activities in the hall to promote their physical development and fitness. Resources are varied each session to develop different skills and to keep children interested. In addition, staff carry out innovative exercises whilst children sit together at group time to support them in focusing well. For example, 'to wake up our brains' and 'to get rid of wriggles'.

Children's health is further promoted by staff who keep records of all accidents, incidents, special dietary requirements and any medication administered for parents to sign for consistency of care. At least one member of staff each session holds a first aid certificate and kits are kept on the premises to support staff in caring for children appropriately in the event of an accident.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe and secure in all areas through the effective measures in place. Staff complete risk assessments to maintain high standards within the setting as well as for all outings to ensure children are safe when away from the premises. Children learn about safety well through staff guidance and practical activities. For example, using craft tools independently, learning about road safety on walks and through themed activities, indoor safe play rules and practising the fire evacuation procedure each term.

Children are cared for within suitable premises in which resources are set out in defined areas to allow children to play and move around the hall safely. All toys are age appropriate and well-maintained. They are sorted in open boxes and low level shelves to allow children to choose freely and safely for themselves.

Children's welfare is safeguarded effectively by staff who have good systems in place to protect them on a day to day basis. For example, keeping child, staff and visitor attendance records and existing injury records. However, there is no system of recording any alternative attendance times for children to further protect them. Staff are all aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection and the procedures involved. They are proactive in responding to any concerns regarding children's welfare to protect them.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good range of play provision and activities to promote all areas of their learning and development. The hall is set out each day to provide free-choice activities, adult led activities linked to themes and easy access to additional resources for children to extend their own play and learning. Most children arrive and settle in well and with confidence. They benefit from the same learning experiences as those in receipt of nursery education funding. Staff note some additional support on planning sheets to ensure they receive challenges appropriate to their stage of development. Children demonstrate a good sense of well-being through positive attitudes to each other and the staff, with whom they are developing good relationships. At the end of the sessions, they excitedly share their morning's experiences with parents and carers.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children's learning is promoted through themes, to which staff link activities and everyday play to support children in making simple connections. Staff use the written plans as a focus, although these are not always consistently clear in making the activity learning intentions clear to all staff. They have a generally good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum to support children's learning and development. Staff use appropriate teaching methods to keep children interested and developing. For example, asking questions to encourage them to think and re-call what they have learnt, such as finding other objects of the same colour.

Children's progress is monitored appropriately through observations made by staff. This information is transferred by managers onto their assessment files. Key information is then linked to planning at half termly staff meetings to ensure meaningful challenges are delivered. However, assessments are not completed regularly and do not show an up to date reflection of children's stage of development. As a result, children are not being encouraged to develop to their full potential in all areas.

Children arrive happy and most settle quickly, independently choosing activities for themselves. They are forming early friendships with others and attachments to staff who they seek out to show their work to and for cuddles. Children are confident communicators. They sit and listen very well at appropriate times, such as group discussion, story time and singing. They talk freely about what they are making and doing and share news during discussion and sociable times. Children make good use of books to explore on their own, with staff and during group story time. Staff plan story time very well and, as a result, children are all included and join in well. They also write freely in many different areas of the hall.

Children are developing an understanding of mathematics. They count aloud together and in their play and some children are learning to recognise numerals. Children are learning about shape through practical activities, such as matching shape cards to tables at break, completing shape programmes on the computer and completing jigsaws. Children are developing a good understanding of time and place. For example, they discuss past events which are important to them, get out and about in the village and explore the environment through out the changing seasons. They also meet members of the local community through visiting the shops, post office, schools and farm.

Children benefit from a good range of physical play provision which is set out at the end of every session. As a result, children move with control and co-ordination when they run, jump, slide, climb, bounce, rock, peddle and crawl. They also move with imagination during singing and action rhymes. Children use different one-handed tools to cut, glue, roll, shape, dig, pour, sieve and rake with materials to support their hand to eye co-ordination. They explore the texture and form of different media and materials. They know their colours well and name them in practical and everyday activities. Children greatly enjoy music and sing with enthusiasm. They learn words to songs well and some more confident children also choose to sing alone in front of the group. They use their imaginations well in the home corner, free choice creative activities and with constructional toys. They are confident in moving resources, such as role play equipment, around the premises to extend their play.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for with equal concern by staff who include them all fairly. Their individual needs are met appropriately in most areas through records of information and profiles from parents, staff interaction and assessments, when completed. However, with no key worker system in place, younger children's needs are not always met efficiently at all times. Children are developing a sound sense of belonging and see a reflection of themselves within the setting. For example, they all sing a welcome and goodbye song to each other every session, have their work displayed and receive stickers for achievement. The setting has a designated special educational needs co-ordinator to ensure any additional care is provided and to link with parents and external agencies for consistency of care.

Children behave well and are clear about what is expected of them. For example, they share, demonstrate good manners, are learning to wait patiently for more popular toys and help staff to settle new children when they start. Staff create a positive and happy environment with lots of activity and close interaction. They provide continuous encouragement and praise and manage any minor issues through gentle verbal reminder and discussion. As a result, children are happy, and show good self-esteem.

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

Staff have established positive partnerships with parents for consistency of care. Parents receive an information pack with setting and curriculum details. They also complete admission forms, consent sheets, detailed profiles of what their child can do and personal information to support staff in settling them in. Parents are kept suitably informed through notices displayed in the entrance, a staff notice board and newsletters. The information pack advises parents of the policies and procedures available to them on request, although these are not available for parents to access information independently. The group offers parents an open door policy to allow them to settle their child in, observe them or help actively in sessions.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are provided with some opportunities to get involved in their child's learning. For example, newsletters usually advise them of the themes and they are invited to a parents meeting in the summer term. However, there are no other details provided on of how children's learning is being promoted to involve parents further. Parents also contribute information regarding their child's stage of development on admission, but this is not always used effectively to form early assessments to promote their learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by an established team of staff who are all aware of their roles and responsibilities. Some staff attend additional training courses to update their knowledge and skills and to support them in meeting children's needs. The setting has adequate recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure all staff are suitable to care for children. Staff's on-going suitability is monitored through job descriptions and an induction programme. There is an appraisal system in place to promote staff development and to support them in improving the quality of care provided. However, this has not been completed for several years.

Children benefit from a well-organised premises which provides designated areas for role play, quiet play, reading, physical activities, creative play and floor activities. As a result, children move about freely and play unhindered, according to their interests. Staff work well as a team in preparing, carrying out chores and meeting care routines efficiently for children.

The setting has some systems in place to monitor the quality of care. For example, staff and committee meetings and health and safety records. However, systems do not ensure all aspects of health and hygiene are promoted well and that attendance records are used accurately to protect children. Also, to ensure systems are in place to support younger children's needs and information to be more accessible to parents. Children's records and relating documentation is easily accessible for staff and stored securely to ensure confidentiality is maintained. Staff and committee update policies and procedures throughout the year to ensure all required information is included according to regulations.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff have some systems in place to monitor the quality of nursery education and its strengths and weaknesses. However, there is no regular evaluation in place to monitor the planning and assessment systems and parental involvement to ensure all aspects of children's learning are promoted well. The staff have established links with the local schools which most children attend to support them with their transition through school.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the setting agreed to ensure there is a written procedure to be followed if a child becomes lost and to meet any recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer (in this case a fire log book). Also, to provide more opportunities for parents to receive regular information on their children's progress.

The setting has implemented a written procedure to be followed if a child becomes lost and keeps a written log of all fire evacuation procedures to improve standards of safety for children. They invite parents to attend a session in the summer term to discuss their child's progress and have an open door policy in place to improve communication.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting agreed to ensure the children have more opportunities to link sounds and letters. It agreed to ensure the use of children's individual assessments influence the planning, enabling more able children to be sufficiently challenged, and the staff are clear of learning outcomes of activities. Also, to provide more opportunities for the children to practise addition and subtraction and use the vocabulary associated with this.

Children sing songs and rhymes to explore sounds and older children learn to recognise key letters on their name cards to teach them about linking sounds and letters. Managers keep daily written plans which sometimes identify the learning intentions for activities and details of target children who will most benefit from the specific challenges. Staff provide some opportunities for the children to learn about calculation.

### **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 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):

- develop systems to support the needs of all younger children, such as implementing a key worker system
- improve systems for monitoring the quality of care to ensure all aspects of health and hygiene are promoted well, that attendance records are used accurately and information is more accessible to parents.

#### **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):

- improve the systems for assessing children's progress to ensure they provide an up to date reflection of each child's stage of development and are used to encourage them to develop to their full potential in all areas
- improve systems of monitoring the quality of nursery education to ensure planning is more consistent and parents are better informed.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)