

Ashton under Hill Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205250
Inspection date	28 November 2007
Inspector	Joyce Cox
Setting Address	The Green Room, Ashton Under Hill, Elmley Road, Evesham, WR11 7SW
Telephone number	01386 882289 or 01386 882014
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Registered person	Ashton Under Hill 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?

Ashton-under-Hill Playgroup registered in 1992 and is a small childcare setting, caring for a maximum of 14 children aged two to under five years each Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning during the school term. It is based in the Green Room of the village hall, which is attached to the school premises. There are currently 13 three and four-year-old children on roll, all of whom receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Two staff work with the children, both of whom have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification Level 3. Staff receive support from the Worcestershire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The playgroup is also a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and has very good relationships with the adjacent First school.

As an addition to its activities, the playgroup has successfully won grants from Community First in two successive years and is considered to be a leading advocate of the Reggio Emilia technique in small rural settings. As such it has run courses for both parents and practitioners from other childcare settings.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about healthy eating in a variety of ways. They select their daily snacks from a nutritious, attractively presented range of fresh and dried fruit, crunchy vegetables and breadsticks. They chatter happily to the staff, as they eat, about which fruit they prefer, and they clearly know that fruit is good for them. Children eat their snacks seated at a table thereby learning very good social skills and eating habits. Visiting a local supermarket helps them to learn about different types of healthy food. Children with special dietary requirements or allergies are known and catered for because staff obtain this vital information from parents when children join the playgroup. Children know that they can have a drink of water whenever they wish.

Children's medical needs are successfully met as staff discuss these with parents at registration. Staff attend training to enable them to support children with special medical needs and they work very closely with parents to make sure that children's welfare is maintained at all times. Children automatically wash their hands at appropriate times and individual towels are used to prevent the spread of infection. They are further protected from the risk of infection as the staff have clear agreements with parents that sick children do not attend playgroup. Children learn quickly to be responsible for their own personal care and know that washing their hands before eating or after using the toilet prevents the spread of germs. They know that putting their hand in front of their mouths when coughing also stops germs spreading. Children learn how to manage their personal hygiene well and older ones do this confidently. Younger children learn the necessary skills with sensitive support and love getting stickers when they remember to cover their mouth when coughing.

Children enjoy physical activity and spend sometime each day playing in the secure, well equipped outdoor area where they develop a good attitude towards physical exercise. They love to run, balance, ride wheeled toys and whiz down the slide. Indoor activities are frequently taken outside so children can continue many aspects of their learning in the fresh air. Children enjoy physical activities in the school hall.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and eager to attend, and are often reluctant to go home. This is because the staff have skilfully made the play room into an interesting and stimulating environment. A good range of enticing activities are set out ready for the children as they arrive. Posters, photographs and attractive displays of their work make the room very welcoming. Children are kept very safe at playgroup because the staff carry out safety checks every morning and make sure all is in order. The exterior playgroup door is secured to prevent children leaving without supervision and the outdoor area is safe because children only play there when they are with an adult.

Children play with a good range of resources, which staff check regularly to make sure they are safe to use. Children learn to keep themselves and others safe as they listen carefully to staff's clear instructions about their safety. For instance, they know never to throw toys as that might hurt others and they know the correct way to carry and stack their chairs after snack time. Consequently, they play happily and safely together.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care. A clear policy is in place to guide them, which is shared with parents so they understand the group's responsibilities regarding the safety of all the children. As a result, the welfare of children is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and happy in the playgroup because of the excellent relationships that exist between the staff and the children. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement so that they confidently choose their own equipment and resources and skilfully try out new experiences. They take part in a wide range of stimulating and exciting activities, for example, they are totally engrossed in building and decorating a large animal from recycled materials. They behave very well, and share toys and equipment sensibly and they respond quickly to gentle reminders about noise levels. They learn to become good communicators because staff successfully promote their language development by using conversation to extend their thinking and play. Younger children and those new to the playgroup receive excellent support because their individual activity preferences are noted and catered for and so that they quickly learn to feel at home.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn and work together well to provide a broad range of activities. Children make good progress towards the expected levels in all areas of learning. Detailed planning ensures that all the areas of learning are covered so children experience a full range of activities. They make exceptionally good progress in their creative development because of the inspirational teaching they receive and the many exciting opportunities to practise their painting, drawing, sticking, gluing and cutting skills. Effective ways of recording what children know and can do means that staff know precisely what level children are at and how they can adapt activities to provide support for some children as well as challenge for the more able. However, systems to identify children's starting points are not fully developed in order that their progress can be tracked in more detail. Children are skilfully encouraged to engage in conversations because of the staff's good questioning skills. Consequently, children speak easily and confidently with adults and their friends. They love books and settle comfortably with staff to read a story, happily joining in with familiar phrases and learning new vocabulary. Many of the older children can have a good go at writing their names and all children have many chances to practise early mark making in a variety of ways. Children are learning a good range of early mathematical skills because they frequently count in everyday situations. For example, the numbers of children present, plates for snack time and objects in stories.

Children have excellent relationships with the staff and are confident and independent learners. They are enthusiastic and persevere for long periods, such as when constructing a complicated wooden train track. They use their imaginations well when organising meals and picnics in the role-play area. Children's achievements are celebrated and valued and they skilfully take photos of what they have made for their record books and to share with their parents. Activities are introduced carefully, taking into account children's interests which means that children are eager to share their thoughts and ideas with staff because they know their views are listened to and valued. Staff work well within the space restrictions, ensuring that resources and equipment is rotated and children know they can ask for additional activities. Children's personal skills develop very well and they are very good at getting out their own equipment and equally

impressive at tidying it away. Their physical development progresses well due to regular outdoor activities, walks in the village and opportunities to use the large school hall.

The curriculum is enriched significantly by an exceptional range of additional activities, which children thoroughly enjoy. Exciting visits out, workshops and talented parents and visitors who share and demonstrate a wide range of skills such as making clay pots, repairing clocks and glass painting give children a brilliant insight into the wider world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are respected and treated as individuals because the staff take time and work closely with their parents to get to know them really well. They play with a good range of resources, which reflect our diverse society and are encouraged to be caring and kind to everyone. There are currently no children with learning difficulties or disabilities in the playgroup but the staff show a very clear understanding of how to work in partnership with parents and other professions to successfully support children with additional needs.

Children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development is fostered. Their behaviour is very good and they learn right from wrong in a supportive environment where positive encouragement, clear explanations and gentle reminders are used effectively to manage behaviour. They love celebrating different festivals and visit the local church, take part in Chinese New Year and Divali activities.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents speak very highly of the good playgroup provision. They note, too, how much their children like the staff and enjoy the activities and how very involved they feel in their children's learning. They feel that they receive very clear information about how staff will care for and educate their children. Parents raise considerable funds for equipment and have recently been involved in improving the outdoor play area. They enjoy attending the many parent workshops with their children to learn new skills such as felt making.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children's learning is assured as they are cared for by suitably qualified and enthusiastic staff who attend numerous training courses and run and host training for other practitioners. Staff continually evaluate their own practice and strive for ways to move onwards and upwards in their work. They implement many procedures to keep children safe and well. Record keeping is good and contains most of the information required for children to be cared for appropriately and in accordance with their parents' wishes. However they do not currently ask parents for written permission for their child to travel in other people's cars. Although the staff themselves do not take children in their cars there are occasions when other parents might.

Leadership and management is good. Staff have been in post for several years and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They display a love of working with children and a commitment to continue to develop their education. The setting have effective systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of nursery education. Staff strive to ensure that the children have exciting opportunities to learn and that the teaching methods used engage and stimulate young children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, staff were asked take action to devise written procedures for lost and uncollected children, obtain written parental permission for administering medicines and to review and update policies relating to special needs, complaints and child protection. Recommendation were also made that rooms were maintained at a suitable temperature, that children have no access to hazardous substances, that risk assessments are conducted, that good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing and asked to provide a range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity.

Children's welfare and safety is promoted effectively because staff have successfully addressed all the actions and recommendations.

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):

- obtain written parental permission for children to travel in other parents' cars.

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):

- develop further systems to identify children's starting points on entry to the group.

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