

Holsworthy Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106337
Inspection date	06 March 2008
Inspector	Carole Argles
Setting Address	Badock Gardens, Bodmin Street, HOLSWORTHY, Devon, EX22 6BQ
Telephone number	07817 486043
E-mail	
Registered person	Holsworthy 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Holsworthy Playgroup has been operating for over thirty years and is run by a voluntary management committee. It operates from purpose-built premises which set are within a public garden area in Holsworthy, Devon. The children use a playroom, an enclosed outdoor area and associated facilities.

Holsworthy Playgroup is registered to provide 16 places for children aged between two and five years old. There are currently 36 children on roll. Of these nine children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup supports children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Currently, there are no children who speak English as an additional language. Children attend from the town and the surrounding rural area.

The playgroup opens weekday mornings from 09.30 to midday during term times only. An additional afternoon playgroup session is held on Thursdays. A toddler groups runs in the premises on Monday afternoons.

There are seven members of staff who work with the children of whom three hold a relevant childcare qualification. The manager is currently undertaking training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are effective measures in place to promote the children's good health. The staff understand how to prevent the spread of infection between children. They ensure that the premises are cleaned daily, provide hygienic hand washing and nappy changing facilities. Suitable procedures are in place to support children if they sustain an accident or become unwell. A member of staff who holds a first aid certificate is always present. Clear medication and accident records are maintained and staff obtain the required parental consents.

Nutritious snacks are provided for the children. There are three different foods that are provided each day and the children choose what they would like from options such as cheese, raisins or a variety of fresh fruit. They have drinking water readily available to take when they are thirsty. Staff liaise with parents to make sure that any specific dietary requirements are met. The children have exercise daily and this helps to keep them fit. They have ample space to move freely in the large outdoor area and enjoy using wheeled toys, rockers and balls. If bad weather prevents children playing outside, staff provide music and movement activities or parachute games in the playroom.

The children are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They learn that they must wash their hands before eating or cooking and are reminded that they must not eat food if it falls on the floor. During a visit from a dentist, they talked about the importance of cleaning their teeth and they learn that they should wear hats and cream in the sun. They are encouraged to eat a wide and varied diet. The staff provide snacks which some children may not have tried before such as fish, melon or Indian and Chinese foods. There are weekly cooking activities when the children help to prepare sweet and savoury recipes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are welcoming to children and their parents because they are well-maintained, warm and decorated with many posters and examples of the children's artwork. Parents and children are greeted on arrival by the staff and each child has coat peg and box for their belongings labelled with their photograph. Staff prepare the playroom before children arrive, setting out toys and activities for them to use and the children part readily from their parents and settle down to play. There is a wide range of equipment, toys and resources to support the children's development. Some items such as books and craft materials are kept where children can select them independently.

The staff have a good understanding of safety issues and implement sound measures to reduce the likelihood of accidental injury to the children. They are vigilant about keeping the premises secure and the children are well supervised at all times. The staff complete appropriate risk assessments and check the premises daily to ensure all is safe for the children to use. They carry out regular fire drills and ensure that all staff and children have the opportunity to take part. This helps the children understand what they must do in the event of an emergency. Children's safety is promoted on outings and walks. A high ratio of adults to children is maintained and many parents accompany their child.

A suitable safeguarding children procedure is in place and this made available to parents so that they understand the responsibilities of staff. Children are never unsupervised with people who have not been vetted. However, information has not been supplied to Ofsted so that the required suitability checks can be completed on the manager and some members of the committee. The staff have a sound understanding of how to safeguard children from harm or abuse and know how they must act if they have concerns about the welfare of a child in their care. There are robust procedures to ensure that children are only collected by people authorised by their parents. This contributes well towards keeping the children safe from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are happy, confident and settled. They develop warm and relaxed relationships with the staff and there is plenty of conversation and interaction between them. The staff are interested in the children and respect what they say. They ask them questions and encourage them to talk about themselves and about what they doing and this contributes well to supporting their communication skills. At times, however, the playroom becomes very noisy and this makes conversation difficult. The staff speak louder to make themselves heard and they have no effective strategies in place to bring noise level down. The children are given encouragement and praised for their achievements, staff value what they do, for example, by displaying their artwork on the walls. This promotes the children's confidence and self-esteem. They learn to be independent with their personal care and they wash their own hands and attempt to put on their coats before outside play.

There is a suitable routine for the sessions which includes times for the children to choose freely from the activities set out for them, periods of outside play and adult-led group activities. During some whole group activities the children participate fully, enjoying the story and joining in enthusiastically with music and movement session. However, during some activities, including the registration time, some children do not join in or wander away and this affects the enjoyment and participation of others. Staff provide a variety of activities which support the all areas of the children's development. Both the planning and most of the records of children's progress are based around the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, activities are adapted so that the younger children can take part and staff generally provide suitable levels of challenge for them.

Nursery education

The quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and use this knowledge when planning and monitoring the children's progress. They provide an interesting and varied programme of activities for the children. These support most areas of their learning well although staff give less emphasis to planning activities to support some aspects of children's physical and mathematical development. Staff observe the children and make notes about what they do and achieve. Recently they have introduced an individual learning plan for each child which identifies an aspect of their development that staff will focus on during the term. However, staff do not update the children's development records promptly so that they can effectively monitor their progress towards the early learning goals. Therefore they cannot be sure that they providing appropriate levels of challenge for each child, particularly those children who are more able. There is a wide range of toys and equipment to support the children's learning and staff change the selection available for them to use each day. However, few resources are stored so that children can make their own choices about what they do and initiate their own play.

Generally the children are interested in the activities and keen to take part, often showing good concentration on self-chosen activities such as completing jig-saw puzzles or on art activities. They thoroughly enjoy some adult-led group sessions such as the 'show and tell' time and the group story and, for example, joined in enthusiastically with repeated refrains in the book 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'. However, some children are reluctant to join the registration time activity or loose interest half-way through. Conversations between these children and members of staff disturb the concentration and learning of those who wish to take part. The children usually have fresh air and exercise daily in the outdoor area. They show a developing awareness of space as they use wheeled toys, avoiding collisions with other children. Staff plan many activities which promote the children's hand-eye coordination well but fewer which support the development of their large muscle movements, for instance, through climbing or balancing activities.

Many children speak clearly and confidently initiating and taking turns in conversations with others. They are beginning to learn the words and actions of familiar songs and rhymes. They enjoy books and often ask staff to read to them individually. They eagerly select books from the pre-school library to take home to share with their parents. The children use one-handed tools to spread glue and cut playdough, which they also mould into shapes with their hands. They show developing good control and coordination as they handle small objects and join puzzle and construction pieces together. The children have many opportunities for mark making using paints, crayons and chalks or using their fingers to draw patterns in cornflour mixture. They know that they can make marks for a purpose and some older and more able children are beginning to form recognisable letters and to write their names.

The children are interested in numbers and some are beginning to count, correctly linking numbers to objects. Staff take advantage of opportunities during activities to ask children to count, for instance, as they spoon flour on to the scales when cooking. However, they rarely ask questions which encourage the children solve simple number problems. The children are beginning to learn the correct vocabulary to describe and compare the size or position of objects. The staff often mime actions such as over or under with their hands to make the meaning of these words clearer to them. The children are beginning to find out about the world around them. Recently they went on a 'scavenger hunt' in the adjacent public garden looking for natural objects such as feathers and flowers, ticking items off on a chart as they found them. The children observe changes, for example, in foods when they mix and cook them. They talk about the weather and the sequence of the months and seasons. The children play cooperatively together and use their imaginations well in role play area, often re-enacting what they know or have seen around them, for example, pretending they are shopping or ironing. The children make models of their own design with a suitable range of recycled materials including boxes and tubes and they have opportunities for painting and collage. Most children can recognise and name colours. They learn about others in society and find out about different festivals, celebrating events of personal significance to them such as Christmas or by baking cakes when it is a child's birthday.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. There are close links between the playgroup and the local community and the children go on trips to the library and fire station, and visitors come into the playgroup to talk with the children about their jobs and what they do. The children begin to learn about the wider world through using a wide variety of resources, including books, puzzles and pretend play toys, which reflect diversity in society.

They begin to find out about different beliefs, cultures and traditions. They celebrate Christian and other festivals including Diwali and Chinese New Year through listening to stories, taking part in art activities and sampling different foods.

The children's individual care needs are met effectively by the staff who work well with their parents, respecting their wishes for their child. There is an effective process to help new children settle quickly at the playgroup. Parents are encouraged to stay until their child is confident to be left. Staff ask for details of the child's likes and interests to allow them to provide reassurance and talk with them about what they know helping them feel safe and secure. There is good support for any children who have learning difficulties or disabilities or other specific needs. The staff work closely with their parents and other agencies to plan and provide range of activities to promote their development effectively. When appropriate, an identified member of staff works with individual children to ensure that they can participate fully in the life of the playgroup. Staff take additional courses to extend their skills and knowledge and they adapt their practice to ensure that all are included. For example, they have recently undertaken training in British Sign Language and they have begun to use this with all children particularly at singing and story times. They use visual clues and pictures, for example, about how the fire drill is conducted or what food will be available for their snack, so that all children know what is happening.

The children generally behave well and play cooperatively with others. The staff use positive strategies to manage their behaviour and are good role models for them treating them with consideration and respect. They have consistent age-appropriate expectations for the children and use praise effectively to help them know when they have done well and to build their self-esteem. The children are helped to understand the effect of their actions on others and learn to share fairly and take turns. For example, staff help them to negotiate when they can have a turn on a favourite wheeled toy, suggesting when the other child has been down the playground and back.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory and this contributes towards supporting the children's progress. Parents are encouraged to become involved with their child's learning at home by helping them find items in the colour of the week and by sharing books chosen from the playgroup's library with them. Information about some of the week's activities is displayed and parents receive suitable information in the playgroup's brochure and regular newsletters to help them understand what is provided for their child. They are kept well informed about what their child has been doing and their achievements through informal discussions with staff and they have access to their child's progress records.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children benefit from the sound organisation of the playgroup. There is a suitable recruitment procedure for new staff and suitability checks are requested. However, Ofsted has not been notified of all significant events including the election of new committee members and the appointment of the current overall manager of the playgroup. Consequently, the required checks have not been carried out to ensure that they are suitable to hold these positions.

The records, policies and procedures which are required to support the children's safety and welfare are in place. Copies of policy documents are made readily available for parents so that they understand how the playgroup is run and what is being provided for their child. The

manager is currently undertaking a relevant childcare qualification. However, there are always sufficient qualified staff present and appropriate adult to child ratios are maintained. Parents help staff by carrying out domestic tasks during the sessions allowing them to work directly with the children. A key person system is in place so that parents have a named person with whom to liaise about their child's welfare and learning. The staff work cooperatively together and understand their roles and responsibilities and the sessions run smoothly for the children. However, at times the room becomes very noisy and the organisation of some adult-led group activities does not capture all children's interest and they do not participate fully.

The leadership and management is satisfactory and this contributes well to supporting the children's learning. The staff are committed to the further improvement of the playgroup and continue to review and develop their practice. Annual appraisals are carried out to identify their training needs and they frequently attend courses. They meet regularly to plan and to evaluate how well the activities have supported the children's learning. Systems to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching and learning are not fully established as the progress records do not cover all areas of the children's learning and are not updated promptly. Therefore staff cannot be sure how well all children are progressing towards the early learning goals.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the provider agreed to ensure that Ofsted is informed of all significant events; to clarify roles and responsibilities of the staff; to review the procedures to ensure the safe administration of medication to children, and to carry out regular risk assessments. The provider also agreed to record observations and assessments of children's progress consistently and to link them with the planning to show how children would be challenged appropriately; to extend and support opportunities for children to read, write and use of numbers; to review procedures and increase staff knowledge of how to support children who have learning difficulties or disabilities, and to provide appropriate information for parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Since that time, the provider has not met the requirement to keep Ofsted fully informed of all significant changes affecting the playgroup. This includes the election of new members to the management committee and the appointment of the current manager. Consequently this remains an issue that must be addressed.

The provider has appointed an overall manager of the playgroup. Areas of responsibility such as health and safety, fire safety and safeguarding children have been delegated to named members of staff who have a clear understanding of their roles. Regular risk assessments are carried out and details are noted of any identified hazards. Action is subsequently taken to remedy them. The staff implement appropriate procedures and maintain the correct records to ensure that any required medication is safely administered to children. These actions have increased the children's safety and welfare.

Staff have introduced a system of observing children's achievements during activities and record them on small notes. They have begun to use this information to help them decide how they will support individual children when planning some activities. However, they do not monitor of all areas of children's development as effectively, including their use of number, and there is often a delay before their progress records are updated. Consequently, staff do not always

have a clear picture of what each child can achieve to help them when planning the next steps in their learning and ensure that they are providing appropriate levels of challenge for them.

The staff now support children's love of books and writing skills well. They willingly share books with them, for example, sitting and reading with one or two children during outside play. They provide a mark making table with pencils and paper and name cards for the children to copy. Although they take opportunities to ask children to count during activities, they rarely plan or provide activities which encourage them to solve problems or challenge the more able children. There is a named special needs coordinator who is responsible for overseeing the identification, care and support of children who have specific needs. She has a clear understanding of her role and liaises effectively with other staff, parents and outside agencies and consequently the children are progressing well.

Information about the Foundation Stage curriculum is displayed where parents can read it and shows the early learning goals that children are expected to achieve by the end of their reception year at school. However, there is less information showing the stepping stones that they will be following and achieving whilst at the playgroup.

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):

- ensure that Ofsted is informed promptly of all significant events, including the appointment of new committee members or manager
- review the planning and organisation of some group times to encourage all children participate fully (also applies to Nursery education)
- develop strategies to reduce the noise level during parts of the session

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):

- review the planning to ensure that there are activities which support all areas of children's learning, including their mathematical and physical development
- review the systems for monitoring and recording children's progress across all areas of their development to assist staff to plan the next steps in their learning effectively

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