

Catsfield Under Fives Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109396
Inspection date	14 July 2008
Inspector	Stacey Sangster
Setting Address	Catsfield Village Hall, Church Road, Catsfield, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 9DP
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Registered person	Catsfield Under Fives 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?

Catsfield Under Fives Group opened in 1994. It operates from two rooms in a village hall in Catsfield. The group does not have access to both rooms for all sessions.

A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time when the group has access to the larger room and eight children when they only have access to the smaller room.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 12.30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 25 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs six staff of whom all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by the practices of the setting. The policy is clear that children who are infectious are not permitted to attend and staff are vigilant about keeping the premises clean. Hygiene practices are good. Children are given explanations about why tables need to be wiped and hands washed before eating and after using the toilet and this helps them to develop a knowledge of how to support their own health.

Children are appropriately protected from the sun with hats and sun cream. Children understand about sun safety from discussions which staff have as they apply sun screen and remind children about keeping covered. Children remind each other that they might get burnt if they take their hat off.

Children's dietary needs are met. Records are kept of any allergies or other forbidden foods and this is collated and kept in the register so that all staff can access this easily. Children are encouraged to make healthy choices with food and are provided with a choice of healthy snacks mid morning to keep their energy levels up.

Drinking water is freely available and the children help themselves frequently, most without reminders from staff. They understand that they need to drink more water in warm weather or after exercise and are beginning to take responsibility for ensuring that their bodies are sufficiently hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe in this setting by the vigilance of staff and the preventative practices that minimise risks and reduce hazards. The premises' security is very good and when children are outside all exits and entrances are closely monitored to ensure that children do not leave unsupervised and no unauthorised people are able to access the children.

The organisation of the resources when using Hermon Cottage is carefully arranged to enable children to move freely and safely in this restricted space. Great care is given to the layout of the room to ensure that children's play space is not restricted. Staff have successfully arrived at an arrangement which allows the children, who are in the older age group, to work in an environment which meets the space ratio without limiting the activities or resources that they have access to. In the larger hall the arrangements are easier because of the amount of space available. Children are less restricted when using the main hall and the arrangement to offer whole group sessions in the hall and rising fives in Hermon Cottage work well.

Children learn about safety through the good quality information that is provided to them in a format which is easy to understand and has meaning to children of their age. This helps children to understand the reasons behind staff requests in relation to safety. They demonstrate this understanding by reminding each other of the consequences if, for example, they run without looking where they are going or wave objects around in close proximity to each other.

Toys and resources are well maintained, plentiful and organised so that children can access them freely and safely. Children are provided with guidance as to how to safely use different resources and this helps them to keep themselves and each other safe.

Staff are knowledgeable with regard to identifying potential risks to children. They are proactive and carry out daily written risk assessments of the areas and resources that children will use, ensuring that they are safe before children arrive.

Staff have a good awareness and understanding of child protection matters. There is a written policy which is clear and detailed and with which all staff are familiar. This provides information to parents and guidance to staff about the procedure to be followed in the event that a concern arises about a child in the care of the group. Systems in place to record and report concerns are good and ensure that the welfare of the child is effectively promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and enjoy their time at this setting. The fun and busy atmosphere combined with caring support from the staff promote a lively, friendly and purposeful atmosphere. Children arrive happy to leave their carers and excited about the games and activities that they will be taking part in. Their individual needs and welfare is promoted. They are provided with activities and play opportunities to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Children's self-esteem and confidence is developed because staff give reassurance, encouragement and appropriate praise.

Daily routines are well planned and provide children with a balance of interesting activities which they can take part in both inside and out. Children very much enjoy the regular outdoor play opportunities and have access outside to a full range of toys and equipment. Relationships between children and staff are warm and affectionate. Positive relationships between the children exist and they show respect and kindness towards one another.

The children have a great deal of fun while attending this group and the sound of the laughter and enjoyment of both staff and children can be heard consistently throughout the sessions.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how to support children's progress through the stepping stones. Children's assessment plays a vital role in determining the level at which activities will be set in order to provide children with sufficient challenge, while enabling them the opportunity to consolidate their learning and practice their newly developing skills. Learning through play in an encouraging and supportive environment and ensures that children enjoy their day. Staff are skilled at motivating children to learn, by identifying what interests them and then applying this to activities which will extend and further their knowledge.

All areas of learning are covered effectively within the curriculum offered. Children's progress is equally sound in all six areas. Planning is organised by all members of staff and this ensures that the adults supporting children have a clear vision about what is needed in order to help them make progress both individually and as a group. Very close links between the assessment of where children are in their learning and the activities that will be offered to help them reach their next step, ensure that children of all abilities are being planned for.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are treated with equal concern and respect. Children's individual needs are established by collecting relevant information from their parents and by staff spending time with the children and getting to know their preferences. High regard is given to providing care and education which meet the specific needs of every child. Children who have additional or special educational needs are integrated fully into this inclusive setting because of the effort that is made to recognize that every child is unique.

Good behaviour is encouraged and promoted well by the setting. Staff provide children with good role models, they are polite to each other and to the children. Staff and children show respect for differences of opinion, abilities and skills. Kindness, sharing and corporation are highly valued. Children develop an understanding of this as they see their friends and peers being enthusiastically praised for demonstrating these attributes, and this encourages all children, to emulate positive behaviour.

Children learn about cultures other than their own through activities, topics and general discussions. They are developing an awareness of the similarities and differences between themselves and others and are encouraged to be interested and ask questions exploring the views of others and comparing them to their own. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good both in relation to care and nursery education. Parents provide essential information about the care needs of their children which are put to good use in providing an environment and routine which meet the individual needs of their child.

Parents receive good quality information about the purpose of the activities that their children will be taking part in and are invited to support the setting as a whole in relation to topic or project work. Information is provided to parents about where their child is in relation to their learning, although specific information about how parents can support the individual children towards the next step is limited to a formal meeting arranged to discuss the child's assessment record.

Daily contact is made with parents via the children's home books. These contain details and snippets of the children's day at the setting and are beautifully illustrated with photographs of children, quotes of things that they have said and other information relevant to supporting continuity of care between the setting and home. Although parents are invited to comment and pass information back to the setting via these books, the number of parents who choose to do this is very small in this limits the effectiveness of the arrangement as a two-way system to support children's care needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

The team supporting the children in this setting comprises of a well qualified, committed and highly skilled group of individuals. Most of the members of staff have worked together for some time at another local preschool and this shows in the ease in which they communicate

with each other, organise the childcare and education and understand their roles and responsibilities within the setting. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that only those suitable to work with children are employed.

The quality of leadership and management of the care and nursery education is good. The setting have been through a difficult period resulting in extensive staff and committee changes. The commitment and hard work of those who have recently joined the staff and committee along with those who remained has resulted in the setting developing a clear vision with a strong focus on the personal development and achievement of all children.

Committee and staff support each other very well, with regular meetings held to ensure that all have a regular opportunity to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The setting work closely with the committee of Ninfield Playgroup who have provided invaluable support both in terms of sharing staffing, policy materials and advice. The settings willingness to work with other professionals in the field has been key to the success of their group.

A key strength of Catsfield Under Fives Playgroup is the effectiveness of the practitioners in promoting inclusive environment in which every child matters. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the setting was found to be inadequate and a number of actions were set. Huge improvements have been made to raise the standard of care to a point where it now surpasses satisfactory and is found to be good in all areas. Specific improvements required in order to meet the standards have all been met in full. These include ensuring that all adults looking after children, or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so; ensuring that appropriate arrangements are identifying supporting children with learning difficulties and all disabilities are implemented; ensuring that at least one member of staff with the current relevant first aid certificate is on the premises or on outings at all times; the creation of an environment that encourages good behaviour and the development of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account the age of stage of development. The development and implementation of an effective observation assessment system, which is used to identify the progress of all children and to inform the future planning that ensures that children are working towards the early learning goals. Finally ensuring that space and resources and used effectively to support children are learning.

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 they can see on request.

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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):

- ensure the accident record details in full the name of those involved.
- continue to monitor the use of the space in Hermon Cottage to ensure children's needs can be met.

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):

- ensure that the assessment records reflect information shared by parents about their children's progress

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