

# Holy Trinity Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	218163
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 May 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Sarah Jane Rhodes
<b>Setting Address</b>	Holy Trinity Community Centre, London Road, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 1LQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 616367
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Holy Trinity Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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?

Holy Trinity Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the playgroup and members of the local community. It opened in 1970 and operates from two rooms on the first floor of the community centre attached to Holy Trinity Church close to Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The group opens on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during school term times. Sessions are from 09:45 until 13:15. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 34 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 13 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide area. The playgroup currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification or a further qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment. They enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. Being active is encouraged. Physical activities such as using climbing and balancing equipment and developing ball kicking skills are provided inside at each session and playing outside in the fresh air is encouraged several times a week. Most children join in enthusiastically as the staff support and monitor their play. Children develop their physical skills and have a positive attitude towards exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through daily routines. They are able to use adequate hand washing facilities and are generally independent in their self-care skills. They know that they need to wipe their hands with wet wipes before eating their snack and staff clean the tables before they are used for food. This helps reduce the risk of cross-contamination. Children's medical needs both in an emergency and with regard to ongoing medication are met through the use of accident and medication procedures that are understood by all the staff. Clear procedures for sick and infectious children help prevent the spread of infection and keeps children healthy.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They have access to drinks from a water dispenser throughout the session ensuring they are not left thirsty. The playgroup provides a mid-morning snack of fruit, with milk or water. All dietary requirements are discussed with parents and would be catered for. Parents provide packed lunches and staff provide guidance on an individual basis about suitable contents this has resulted in all children bringing a range of suitable items in their lunch boxes. These strategies along with appropriate encouragement from staff, help children develop a positive attitude to healthy eating.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming first floor environment. The two rooms are a bright friendly environment with posters and children's art work displayed, they are organised to interest children and meet their needs. Risks to children are currently limited through adequate safety and security procedures. Staff monitor access to the group at all times. Staff undertake daily checks to ensure the hall and equipment are suitable for the children to use but staff are not confident about more formal risk assessments and how they would update themselves on the latest health and safety guidelines. Emergency evacuation procedures are fully understood by staff and practised twice a term. Staff explain safe practices to children, such as, using the rope to keep together when walking to the outside area. They plan activities that cover safety topics, like crossing the road, through a visit by the school's crossing patrol officer. This helps children remain safe, and allows children to develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Children can access a wide range of safe resources, appropriate for the interests of pre-school children. These are well presented by staff and children are able to choose from the inviting range on tables, floor space and dedicated areas, such as the book corner or physical play and role play areas. This creates a pleasant and safe environment that children can enjoy and facilitates their ability to be independent and play constructively.

Staff have an adequate understanding of child protection procedures and reporting processes, which ensures children are protected. All staff are aware of the setting's child protection procedures and where to report concerns, which ensures that staff fully understand their responsibilities in protecting children from harm. However, the child protection policy does not make clear what action would be taken in the event of an allegation being made about a member of staff.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have warm and comfortable relationships with staff and each other, they play happily together and with adults, confidently deciding which areas to play in. The setting has a welcoming and caring environment children use both rooms freely, one room provides table top activities and floor space along with a book corner and messy play equipment, the other has large physical apparatus and role play props. They concentrate for good periods of time, for example, when examining snails in the outside play area. Children's language and communication skills are promoted by staff through constant conversation and regular singing sessions. Consequently, children are learning to develop their speech and are able to express their needs appropriately. There is a good range of resources throughout the setting to promote imaginative play and children play together in small groups, for example, with small world play on the road mat or preparing and serving meals in the role play area. As a result, children's social skills are developing well. Staff plan activities which cover areas identified in the Foundation Stage and make regular reference to the 'Birth to three matters' framework in their planning. This means they are fully utilising the, 'Birth to three matters' framework to develop children under three years. Staff take regular observations of what all children in the group can do, they have a good understanding of individual children's personalities and learning styles. The next steps in children's learning they identify are linked into the planning of future activities at planning meetings to help maximise children's progress.

#### **Early Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a generally sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and an acceptable understanding of how young children learn and progress. Planning is broad, links to the stepping stones and the 'Birth to three matters' framework, covering general play activities and adult focused activities. It provides guidance for staff to ensure a range of activities and experiences are provided for children to extend their learning in most areas. However, planning is not flexible enough to identify and expand on children's interests in a spontaneous way. For example, on the day of inspection children's intense interest in the large number of snails in the garden was not followed up through other activities once inside. Staff do use active methods to maintain children's interest, using interesting props during group discussions, asking questions, providing help and support and extending their play with, for example, sheets to help children look for a range of mini beasts when outside. Staff help raise children's awareness of the community and the wider natural world in a variety of ways such as visits by members of the local community or visits to places of interest in the area. Assessment and evaluation of children's achievements during activities is undertaken and observations are used to help staff plan for the next steps in children's learning. Behaviour is well managed and this results in a calm and caring environment for children. Children who find it more difficult to conform to the group's rules are supported to build an understanding of what is acceptable. The rooms are well organised and offer a stimulating environment with a good range of resources set out by staff to promote children's learning.

Children are interested and eager to take part in activities. They show good concentration, are actively engaged and some persist for considerable periods of time. They are eager to join in group story times responding quickly to the tambourine sounding the start of the session. Children behave well and have warm relationships with both staff and each other. They are able to start to take care of themselves, being able to dispense drinks and unpack their lunch boxes. Children's language skills are appropriate for their age. They speak clearly sharing their experiences in one-to-one conversations. Children show good interest in books in the book corner, both in group sessions and individually at other times. Staff provide opportunities for children to write at each session through a writing table but only limited use is made of this and children receive little input on linking letters to sounds.

Children understand and use numbers appropriately for their age. Some count up to twelve with help and are able to match number to object as they count the number of snails on the grass. They demonstrate that they understand shape during puzzle activities and use concepts of length in activities like ordering items by length. They develop an initial sense of time and place through discussion with staff and activities such as craft work about St. George's Day. They explore and investigate, through adult lead activities, for example, looking at mini beasts. Also through their own role play, using play equipment in small world situations. Children have limited access to information and communication technology, for example, calculators and programmable toys.

Music and movement sessions allow children to express themselves through dance and to learn to control their bodies, they develop a sense of space and the ability to move safely avoiding others. They have daily access to a range of climbing and balancing equipment inside and tricycles and balls outside. They use tools competently as they draw their pictures and use tools and scissors with dough. They are able to express themselves freely through painting and use their imagination well as they play with dressing-up clothes and with the cars and roadway.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are seen as individuals and their confidence and self-esteem is developed by staff, with use of praise and encouragement on arrival and during their play throughout the session. Children feel a sense of belonging, they move confidently round the hall, are settled and happy, they make choices and take decisions between play activities. They have warm relationships, know the routine, are comfortable and enjoy the session. Staff ensure that the resources and activities positively represent the children who attend, as well as individuals from the wider community and festivals are celebrated. Where children speak English as an additional language their home language is valued and parents are encouraged to help staff understand more about their home culture. Children are developing their knowledge of the wider world, through visits by members of the local community, such as the school crossing patrol officer and fire service staff. The setting's policies promote inclusion for all children and the premises are suitable for all to access. Good support is provided for children with physical and learning disabilities and their needs are met through one to one support where this is felt necessary.

Children behave very well, and respond positively to boundaries set by staff. Children who find it slightly more difficult to conform to the groups rules are supported to quickly build an understanding of what is acceptable. They take turns and share, help and show concern for each other by, for example, picking up a dropped hat and returning it to its owner. They are learning to use their manners. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All children benefit from the positive partnership staff are developing with parents and carers. Children settle well because the staff work closely with parents to ensure their child's needs are met. Children's individual needs are discussed and recorded with parents on the children's enrolment form and information booklet they fill in at home about themselves. Parents are made aware of how the setting operates through discussion both before children start to attend and on a daily basis at the beginning and end of the sessions, as well as through regular newsletters. Daily verbal information is exchanged with parents about their child's well-being. The parents have easy access to the playgroup's policies through the file left in the hallway for parents to look through at the beginning or end of the sessions. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive early education is satisfactory. A good range of information on the educational programme is shared at the beginning of the placement through parents' sessions and parents' thoughts are gathered for the start of the 'Stepping Stones' booklet. Parents receive ongoing information about their child's progress through end of term reports. However, parents are not given information about how children learn through play during the sessions or how they can be involved in and enhance their own child's learning at home. This does not allow all parents to develop a full understanding of how play is used as a main learning strategy both at playgroup and at home.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are adequate staff recruitment and vetting procedures in place for when new staff are recruited, which ensures children are protected. Most staff who work with the children are qualified and additional training courses have been attended. This contributes to the quality of care and experiences provided for children. Staff are appropriately managed and there are systems in place to provide clear direction, support and leadership, for example, regular staff meetings take place and staff appraisals have been introduced. Appraisals are detailed and help the setting and individuals reflect on the setting's strengths and weaknesses. However, they do not include a system to check the ongoing suitability of staff by asking, for example, about their current health or criminal record status. Appropriate guidance is given by the manager and committee to ensure that staff are clear in their roles; they work as a very supportive and stable team. Staff are confident to take on a variety of roles within the setting and during sessions. Policies and procedures are in place to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. There are systems in place for recording accidents, medication and attendance. However, the child protection policy and staff's knowledge of risk assessments lacks some necessary detail.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Guidance and support is given by the manager and committee to ensure that the educational programme is delivered appropriately. There are systems to develop the curriculum, internally staff are deepening their knowledge by developing systems of planning and observation. Externally additional support is provided through regular visits by the local authorities advisory teacher and staff are active in implementing her suggestions. Overall, children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the group agreed to ensure that safety risks to children are minimised with regard to electrical sockets. Daily checks are now in place, however, staff have limited knowledge of changes to health and safety legislation or use of formal risk assessments. This has been carried forward as a recommendation from this inspection.

They also agreed to improve outcomes for children under the age of three years by implementing a framework in line with 'Birth to three matters' and improve the knowledge and understanding of the registered person (the committee) with regard to their roles and responsibilities, such as the recruitment of staff. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is now a main part of planning for all staff and children under three years are well supported. Staff recruitment and monitoring has been addressed and adequate systems are now in place. The monitoring of ongoing suitability has partly been addressed through annual appraisals. A recommendation is carried forward to develop the monitoring of ongoing suitability to include declarations by staff regarding their health or criminal record status.

At the last nursery education inspection the group agreed to improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, improve planning to help ensure that activities provide challenge and meet children's individual levels of understanding and evaluate activities to ensure that they are meeting children's individual learning needs and are identifying the next steps in children's learning.

Staff now have an adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage to provide an acceptable level of provision. They also have a good knowledge of individual children's levels of attainment and use this knowledge and the planning to meet children's needs at varying levels. Activities are now evaluated and children's next steps are identified and brought forward to the planning meetings to ensure they are addressed.

Finally the group agreed to put in place procedures to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education. The staff appraisal system has introduced a mechanism to identify strengths and weaknesses, along with parent questionnaires and local authority workers feedback. The manager is also undertaking a course which requires her to reflect on her practice. This means that both the manager and the committee are clear about what improvements are required in the nursery education.

This has ensured the quality of the care and nursery education are now of a satisfactory standard throughout the setting.

### **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 a system to monitor the ongoing suitability of adults who look after the children
- expand the child protection policy to include actions to be taken in the event of an allegation being made about a member of staff
- strengthen the processes that inform the manager about changes in health and safety requirements and risk assessments.

### **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):

- encourage the children to use the opportunities provided to start to make meaningful marks and expand their use of linking letters to sounds
- develop ways that children's spontaneous interests can be used to drive activities in all areas of learning, for example, the children's intense interest in snails on the lawn
- provide information to parents on how they can extend their child's learning at home and how children learn at playgroup.

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)