

Helsby Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 305100
Inspection date 21/09/2009
Inspector Elizabeth Margaret Grocott

Setting address Chester Road, Helsby, Frodsham, Cheshire, WA6 0AZ

Telephone number 01928 726410

Email

Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Helsby Playgroup was registered in 1968 and is managed by a committee. It is registered on the Early Years Register and operates from a church hall in the Helsby area of Cheshire. Children attend from the local and surrounding community. The playgroup operates from a large hall which is divided into designated areas for play. All areas are accessible on the ground floor. There is a secure area for outdoor play, which has safety surface.

The playgroup is registered for 26 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and there are currently 24 children on roll from two years to under five years. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. It is open on Monday to Wednesday from 9.15am until 2.45pm and Thursday and Friday from 9.15am until 11.45am in term time only.

The playgroup employs five staff, of whom four have a relevant childcare qualification. The playgroup are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. Staff receive support from the local authority and an early years advisory teacher.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Children play happily and form sound relationships with staff, who make observations of their development but these are not linked to the six areas of learning. Not all children have development records and weaknesses in the safeguarding policy and staff's knowledge and understanding of procedures put children at risk. The manager has reflected on her practice using self-evaluation but has not identified areas for development, resulting in a service that does not respond to the needs of all of its users. There is no detail of procedures in the complaint policy and the playgroup has not obtained written permission before giving medication. The playgroup has responded satisfactorily to recommendations raised at the last inspection leading to some improvements in outdoor play, the development of staff and children's ability to help themselves to water throughout the session.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- ensure there is an effective safeguarding children policy and procedure implemented. This must include 22/09/2009

the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. The provider must ensure that all members of staff understand the safeguarding policy and procedure (Safeguarding and welfare)

- keep records of the information used to assess suitability to demonstrate to Ofsted that checks have been done. Such records must include the unique reference numbers of CRB Disclosures obtained and the date on which they were obtained (Suitability of adults) 22/09/2009
- make a record of risk assessments clearly stating when it was carried out, by whom, date of review and any action taken following a review or incident (Suitable premises, environment & equipment) 22/09/2009
- lead and encourage a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development to improve the quality of provision for all children (Organisation) 22/09/2009
- put in place a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints, investigating all written complaints relating to the requirements and notifying complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint (Safeguarding and welfare) 22/09/2009
- obtain prior written permission for each and every medicine from parents before any medication is given and write and implement a procedure to be followed in the event of a child going missing (Promoting good health) 22/09/2009

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- deliver the six areas of learning through planned, purposeful play, identify children's starting points and strengthen the links between planning and assessment systems to clearly show how their individual next steps are to be planned for to offer sufficient challenge and maximise their learning
- support children in using a range of ICT to include cameras, photocopiers, CD players, tape recorders and programmable toys in addition to computers.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff help children to learn to keep themselves safe by encouraging them to practise evacuating the playgroup on a regular basis and reminding them not to run about indoors in case they slip. However, the child protection coordinator has weaknesses in her knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures and

evidence that all staff have had Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks cannot be provided. The safeguarding policy does not detail the procedure to be followed should an allegation be made against a member of staff or volunteer. There is also no written procedure should a child go missing at the setting. These are all breaches of the welfare requirements and put children at risk. A full risk assessment of the setting has been undertaken and daily checks recorded, ensuring the environment is safe for children. However, the risk assessment has not been signed or dated. The complaint policy does not give any detail of the procedure to be followed if the playgroup received a complaint from a parent. The contact number for the regulator is outdated. Although the setting administers medication to children, which is recorded, there is no written permission for giving medication from parents. These are also breaches of the welfare requirements and put children at risk.

Although several staff have gained early years qualifications since the last inspection, they do not attend many short courses to help build their knowledge and understanding in different areas of childcare. They have annual appraisal and attend staff meetings where the quality of teaching and learning is evaluated. The manager has reflected on what the setting does but as yet has not included staff or parents in this. The self-evaluation has not been effective in identifying any areas for development, so outcomes for children do not improve. At the last inspection the playgroup did not have an outdoor play area and so children's regular access to fresh air and vigorous exercise was limited. Since then an outdoor area has been provided, covered with safety surface. This enables children to have time outdoors each day throughout the year. They are able to build large muscle groups as they ride tricycles and other sit-and-ride toys, explore the outdoor environment and enjoy fresh air. This demonstrates an ability to improve. Children with special educational needs and disabilities are appropriately supported. Children's good health is promoted as they have access to water throughout the day where they can help themselves to drinks when they are thirsty. The playgroup have made effective links with others providing EYFS, sharing information to support children's achievements and well-being.

The playgroup has a positive relationship with parents and carers. Parents are regularly involved in the playgroup as they take turns to help out on a regular basis. They can see first-hand and be involved in their child's learning. They are provided with a brochure when their child first starts at the playgroup, detailing routines and some of the policies and procedures. They are provided with questionnaires to seek their opinions on a variety of topics to enable them to contribute to decision making about the provision. Parents are part of the management committee and are invited to share and comment on children's profiles throughout the year, ensuring they are involved in their child's learning and development.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Most children make progress in the EYFS due to staff's experience and their understanding of strategies that encourage learning. The staff use effective

teaching methods that make use of the daily routines to promote learning. For example, counting how many chairs will be needed at the table for snack time. Staff have a sound understanding of the EYFS and most make observations to assess children's learning regularly, although for some children there are no development records. As yet staff are not making baseline assessments or connections between the observations and the six areas of learning, so it is not clear how much progress is made in relation to children's capabilities and starting points, nor if there are gaps in children's learning.

Children are happy and contented, choosing freely from activities provided. They make pictures from pre cut flower shapes, engage in construction on the carpet, roll out play dough, making number patterns in it and enjoy the familiar story of 'The Gingerbread Man'. They are encouraged to take part in the story, bringing it to life by moving the gingerbread man through the pages following his adventures. When they play outside they use their imagination well as they pretend they need petrol in their cars and bikes and go to 'fill up' like daddy does at the petrol station. Children enjoy a game of basketball with adults as they practise their throwing and aiming skills.

Children demonstrate feeling secure and develop a sense of belonging at the playgroup as their artwork is displayed around the walls. They develop a sense of how to stay safe within the setting, knowing if they run inside they might fall and hurt themselves. Children have an understanding of healthy lifestyles as they are positively encouraged when they bring a healthy packed lunch, and they know they must wash their hands before meals and have plenty of water to drink. They are beginning to gain an understanding about diversity through activities and experiences they participate in. For example, Diwali and Chinese New Year when they taste Chinese food and practise using chopsticks. They generally behave well, respond positively to requests from staff and are encouraged to develop caring attitudes towards their peers. Children develop some skills that will aid them in the future, but do not have regular access to information technology.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	4
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	4
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	4

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

