

Five Ashes Community Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109421
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Inspector	Fran Fielder
Setting Address	Five Ashes Village Hall, Five Ashes, Mayfield, East Sussex, TN20 6JA
Telephone number	07747112509
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Registered person	Five Ashes Community 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?

Five Ashes Community Playgroup opened in 1988. It operates from Five Ashes Village Hall. The group have use of the main hall and a meeting room. There is a kitchen, toilet facilities and a secure outdoor play area. It serves families from the local community and surrounding villages.

There are currently 14 children, aged from two to four years, on roll. This includes nine children in receipt of nursery education funding. The playgroup makes provision for children who have learning difficulties and for those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens five mornings a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 12.00. There is also a lunch club that operates from 12.00 until 13.10. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are four members of staff who work with the children. Three members of staff have a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from an advisor from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in an environment where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene. Effective daily routines and the staff's own good practice prevent cross infection. Children know that washing their hands before eating prevents the spread of germs. Staff encourage children to wipe their noses and ensure tissues are always available for this purpose. This helps children learn and think about their personal needs.

Children receive nutritious snacks such as fruit, raw vegetables, crackers and breadsticks. They have a choice of milk or water to drink. This ensures children develop healthy eating habits. Drinking water is always available in individual bottles. Staff take into account all dietary needs to ensure children remain healthy. Staff act in the children's best interest if they are taken ill while at playgroup. Parents are kept fully informed of the child's health by well-maintained documentation.

Children benefit from daily physical activities in a spacious hall as well as outdoors when the weather is suitable. They enjoy a good range of well-planned activities that help keep them healthy and develop their physical skills. Physical activities link to the overall topic and children enjoy bouncing like Kangaroos when working on a topic about Australia. Children show skill when throwing, catching, bouncing and rolling balls. They have the opportunity to play on large equipment that helps develop climbing and balancing skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The foyer of the provision is welcoming with bright posters and information for parents. There are very few displays of children's work within the hall as children take everything home each day. Children play in a spacious, bright and well-organised environment which allows them to move around safely. Staff lay out an adequate range of toys and resources from which children can choose. Resources are in good condition and staff check these regularly to ensure they are safe for children to use.

The premises are secure and it is easy for staff to monitor who is approaching the provision. A daily safety checklist ensures all areas indoors and out are safe. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussion within the setting and visitors such as the fire officer.

Recent training ensures staff have a sound knowledge of how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse. This safeguards children's welfare. Although staff act appropriately if they have concerns their knowledge of the procedures to follow are not secure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happily and even the very youngest settle quickly. They play happily and confidently speak to visitors. This indicates they trust their carers and feel safe in the setting. Staff support children's growing independence. They encourage children to see to their personal needs such as visiting the lavatory and blowing their nose. Staff are calm, gentle and encourage children to play together and share. All children enjoy a range of opportunities that help develop

their social skills. They sit together at snack time and learn to listen to each other during 'show and tell' time.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan a range of activities that cover all areas of learning. Plans include differentiation by age and do not take into account individual rates of learning. Although staff make observations these are not used to inform the planning. As a result, staff cannot support children sufficiently well to help them make good progress in all areas.

Children are happy and confident. They develop independence as they see to their personal needs. Each day staff appoint a helper who carries out a variety of tasks such as leading the group when going outside and placing name labels on the table before snack time so children know where to sit. This encourages children to enjoy responsibility and makes them feel important. Some children concentrate well on self-chosen activities. They register themselves by finding their name card and they have named pegs which gives them a sense of belonging.

Children are confident speakers and happily talk to the group about the items they bring in for the 'show and tell' session. Children have many opportunities for mark making including printing, drawing, painting and writing. However, they receive insufficient guidance on how to form letters correctly and have little access to writing in different forms. Each week children learn about a letter and the sound it makes. However, there is insufficient opportunity for children to consolidate their learning or apply their knowledge. They know the words to many nursery rhymes and join in songs such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' and 'The Wheels on the Bus'.

Daily routines include activities that increase children's understanding of number and simple calculation. Children count during circle time to see how many children and adults are present. They count the boys and girls and then add them together. They learn about time by playing games such as 'What's the Time Mr Wolf?' and have opportunities to play with puzzles and peg boards.

Visitors such as a nurse, a postal worker and a police officer help children understand the importance of different jobs. Children learn about the local environment through outing to places such as Blackberry Farm, Nutley Windmill and the Llama Park. Children also visit the local school in preparation for moving on from playgroup. They have access to a range of information and communication technology.

Children enjoy role-play and 'cooking' on the barbeque as part of their topic on Australia. They use sponges to make prints of animals and help to create a large painting of Ayers Rock. They act out whole stories together such as 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Children experiment with musical instruments to recreate sounds made by different animals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff ensure all children can take part in the full range of activities available. Children feel valued as staff treat them with respect. Children gain an understanding of the wider world by studying different countries such as Australia. They have access to a limited selection of resources that reflect positive images of our diverse society. Staff have an understanding of

how to support children with learning difficulties but do not always follow up requests from parents for support.

Children behave well because staff explain and make clear the expectations of behaviour giving reasons for requests. This helps children understand right from wrong and ensures harmony. Children develop a good self-image and respond positively to staff that use praise and encouragement for things such as 'good sharing' and 'good listening'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive information about the setting and topics through newsletters and displays. They find staff friendly and approachable and are truly delighted with the service provided. Policies and procedures are available but since they are out of date, they are of little value. General daily discussions inform parents of any concerns. However, there is no formal system to discuss individual progress. As a result, there is little opportunity for parents to support children's learning effectively at home or to contribute towards the assessment process.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The supervisor communicates well with the staff to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the group such as setting up ready for activities. Staff organise space well to ensure children gain fully from all activities. Staff are mostly well-deployed ensuring appropriate supervision and support. Mandatory records are well maintained apart from the register which does not clearly show children's times of attendance.

All policies and procedures are in place but do not reflect practice and some do not contain all required information. This lack of review of the paperwork means staff and parents do not have the most up to date information. There is no formal induction programme for staff and the appraisal system has lapsed. This means staff strengths are not known and training needs are not addressed. Activities are evaluated but do not identify strengths and areas for improvement in the curriculum.

The staff team have worked together for some years creating a stable environment for children. This also ensures consistency of care for the children. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the group was asked to amend some of the information that goes to parents to ensure it is clear and consistent. The information was reviewed and it is now clear to parents who is responsible for registration of the provision. However, there are still many discrepancies in the policies and procedures giving parents inaccurate information. This means parents have insufficient information about the way in which the staff care for the children.

At the last education inspection, the group was asked to reorganise group learning activities so all children have sufficient space and can clearly see artefacts and demonstrations. Children receive guidance so that all children can see easily without being squashed.

The group were also asked to use information from parents to support the assessment process and to share information with all parents on what their children need to do next to make progress in each area of learning. Children do not contribute towards their children's assessment

and do not receive information about children's next steps for learning. This means children's achievements are not recognised and parents are unable to support their children's learning at home.

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):

- review all policies and procedures to ensure all relevant information is included and that they reflect practice and maintain an attendance record that reflects the times when children are present
- reintroduce the appraisal system to identify staff's strengths, their ongoing suitability and their training needs
- ensure regular meetings to discuss the effectiveness of the provision and help identify areas for development

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):

- increase opportunities for children to see examples of writing, link sounds to letters and to practise writing letters
- make regular observations to identify where children are in their learning and use this to inform the planning so all children are suitably challenged
- introduce formal feedback for parents so they are aware of their children's progress and can contribute towards their learning and assessment

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