

Hamilton Community College Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226890
Inspection date	25 April 2007
Inspector	Patricia King
Setting Address	Hamilton Community College, Keyham Lane West, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE5 1RT
Telephone number	0116 2433390
E-mail	hamiltoncommunity@ukonline.co.uk
Registered person	Leicester City Council
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Hamilton Community College opened a playgroup in 1988 and an out of school club in 1999. Both groups operate from a designated early years base within the college and have access to other defined areas within the college. The college is situated between the districts of Hamilton and Netherhall and takes children from these areas. A maximum of 15 children may attend the playgroup at any one time and 45 children from five to eight years may attend the Out of School Club. The playgroup is open terms times only on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 09.00 until 11.30 and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12.30 until 15.00. The Out of School Club is open terms times only on every weekday from 15.00 until 17.30.

There are currently 33 children from two to five years on roll in the playgroup. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs five members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting is supported by the Local Authority

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health and well-being is promoted well in the setting. Children are actively encouraged to use good practices which contribute to their understanding of a healthy body and personal hygiene. For example, staff consistently talk to children about why they are wiping down tables and surfaces to get rid of the dirt and germs when changing table activities and preparing for snacks. Children confidently use the toilet, and explain the importance of daily routines, such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before handling food. This means they are learning about self-care and developing their independence. Sound policies and procedures are consistently followed by staff to take appropriate action in the event of an accident and to administer any necessary medication. Children are further protected from infection by the clear policy that children must not attend when ill or infectious and information about relevant contagious diseases is displayed to parents.

Children benefit from the healthy eating programme promoted at the setting. A nutritious daily snack, such as fresh fruit and vegetables is provided and children are frequently offered food from different cultures, for example, burfi, chapattis, rice, and samosas. Staff use this activity to talk about and promote healthy eating and children are actively encouraged to try new tastes. Careful attention is paid to meeting all individual dietary and health requirements. Children are learning to recognise their own needs and are able to help themselves to water throughout the session.

The daily routines are organised effectively to provide opportunities for children to take part in physical activities indoors and have regular outings into the school grounds. A good range of physical play equipment is available, such as ride on toys, balance beams, hoops, a climbing frame, tunnels and a parachute. Staff use the equipment imaginatively to promote motor skills, for example, children enthusiastically employ the parachute to play games, dance and exercise. Children enjoy the benefits of the open air as they use an allotted area to plant seeds and bulbs, walk and explore the grounds. This means that the outdoor environment is used well to promote children's health and well-being.

Children under three benefit from effective practice in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework to offer positive opportunities for children to learn how to become healthy individuals. For example, by talking about healthy eating and personal hygiene and having quality times to play and exercise daily.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well secure room designated solely for the setting's use. Staff have created a colourful, stimulating environment where children are encouraged to learn and develop their sense of belonging. For example, many interesting and creative displays of the children's work, numbers, shapes, colours, letters are placed around the walls at child height. These are used effectively by staff and visited frequently by children to practice counting, point out

letters and sounds. Children have easy access to a good range of developmentally appropriate resources and child-sized furniture arranged to promote independence and choice safely.

Children are learning simple rules for their safety, such as not to run indoors or push, and know why these are important to prevent accidents. They respond appropriately when staff remind them to behave safely and are keen to identify examples of safe behaviour. For example, when listening to the story of Rosie's walk they eagerly said that Rosie must keep away from the pond because it is dangerous to play near water. Children's safety indoors is consistently maintained because effective risk assessments are in place, however, the safety of under fives is potentially compromised because written permission has not been obtained to transport these children from the setting. Arrivals and departures are carefully supervised and visitors are challenged to explain their presence on the premises. Secure systems ensure that children are only collected by their parents or other adults by prior arrangement.

Children are protected because staff have a good understanding of their child protection responsibilities and know whom to share their concerns with both in the setting and externally. However, the written procedures do not clearly inform of the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance which means that in the event of concerns appropriate action could be compromised.

Children under three benefit from practice in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework to offer positive opportunities for children to learn how to keep safe in daily activities and routines, such as learning safe behaviour.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Careful attention is paid to ensure that children's individual care needs are identified which means that staff know the children well. Children confidently enter the setting and eagerly explore the wide range of interesting planned and free activities provided for them. Children are settled and happy in the setting and are confident to talk to staff who ask them lots of questions to make them feel valued. Activities for under threes are integrated into the planning for the Foundation Stage which means that appropriate early years guidance, for example, the 'Birth to three matters' framework is not used to promote children's development. However, a good range of quality toys, activities and resources is used creatively and effectively to provide positive opportunities for children to develop and learn. For example, the children made seed packets and flowers to sell in the garden centre they are creating out of the home corner equipment. Children are proud to display their pictures, projects and photos of themselves at play, many taken by the children. They have many opportunities to foster their imagination and creativity and enjoy working with a variety of mediums such as paint, water, sand, craft materials and snow when available. Children are learning about the world around them, the natural world, and have positive opportunities to become competent learners and communicators.

The plans for the Out of School care indicate that children are able to take part in a wide variety of interesting, creative and challenging activities. Photos and records demonstrate that the children prepare and cook nourishing snacks to be eaten at the setting and treats to take home. They have devised competitions and enjoy putting on shows to entertain and raise funds for charities, such as Children in Need. Children evaluate the activities and their comments indicate that they have good fun in a safe and secure environment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children are confident and demonstrate a sense of belonging because they enter the setting eagerly and settle into the daily routines with interest. They are forming positive relationships with each other and with adults. For example, several children worked together in the garden centre/home corner to draw their chairs together and informed the staff member they were having a sit down and a chat. Children have confidence to talk to visitors and proudly show their work on display and the photos of them at play which promotes their confidence and self-esteem. Children are learning to manage their own behaviour, for example, they keep simple rules such as helping to tidy toys and learning to be safe. Children are learning good manners and respect for each other in social settings, such as meal times and respond well to the positive role models displayed by staff, for example, they are encouraged to say please and thank-you. Children are learning about other cultures and lifestyles through an informed and interesting range of activities, such as music, dance, trying foods from different cultures and finding out about other lifestyles, practices and significant occasions. Children listen intently to a familiar story in a small group and make positive contributions. For example, they eagerly explained the danger of the hen walking near to the pond and anticipated the places where Spot the Dog was hiding. Children show keen interest in books and stories read to them and follow the print with an adult lead. They frequently visit the well resourced book corner independently and most eagerly join when a staff member is present. Children use language confidently to talk about their families, their play and in social situations, for example, a new baby brother was discussed enthusiastically and they readily shared their thoughts about the taste of the mango at snack time. Most children recognise and write their own name and use the varied mark making opportunities, such as in their scrap books, lists and receipts in the garden centre.

Children are consistently encouraged by adults to develop their mathematical learning in well-planned and imaginative activities. For example, making the seed packets and flowers involved lots of discussion and questions about shape, size, and "how many seeds will we put into the packet?" Staff make effective use of counting opportunities in daily routines, such as when lining up to enter the hall or counting plates and cups at meal times. This means that opportunities for the children to make progress in mathematical development are captured well. Children use a wide range of objects and materials imaginatively to design and make models and collages which they are proud to display around the room. Children are confident in the use of IT and programmable toys and some use the computer skilfully. They enjoy exploring and investigating different materials, such as wet and dry sand, and working in the garden allotted to the group. Children are learning about changes that take place in the outside world as they observe and discuss the weather and passing seasons. Their discussions are linked to health and bodily awareness as they talk about what to wear in different weather. Some children eagerly explained that they wore their coats today because it was raining. In the recent past a sudden snowfall was used to talk about how the snow changed the scenery and how to keep themselves safe and warm when they went outside. Children are developing a sense of time and place, for example, they found out about everyday items from the past, such as household utensils, personal possessions and photos. They enjoy talking about themselves, their families and the community around them, for example, they eagerly talk about older and younger family members. The setting regularly takes part in charity fund raising events which means children are becoming aware of the needs of others.

Children are learning to use small tools and materials, such as scissors, glue spatulas and spades with confidence and skill. They move around the room safely, confidently and having careful regard for other's space, for example, when moving between activities or packing the toys away they moved sensibly and negotiated the space well. Children are eager to go into the hall for physical play and recognise the changes that take place in their bodies when they exercise, for

example, they describe getting hot and thirsty when running around. Children are learning to use musical instruments from different cultures to mark time and experiment with sounds and rhythm. Taped music is used imaginatively throughout the routines, for example, children enthusiastically clapped, waved and did brain gym exercises accompanied by popular music. Children make effective use of props, such as a good range of dressing up materials, puppets and small figures, to support imaginary play. They describe what they are painting or making and explain how they are doing it. For example, they used different textures, shapes and materials to illustrate their story books about the bear hunt.

Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Staff regularly observe and note what children can do and records of children's achievements are kept up to date efficiently. Planning covers all areas of learning and systems are in place to ensure that children's progress is well recorded and checked to ensure that learning is secure. However, plans do not clearly show how that assessments are used consistently to inform planning in order to set clear challenges for children's next steps in learning. Staff work as a cohesive team to plan and offer a wide range of interesting and creative learning opportunities. They know the children well and use effective questions and spontaneous opportunities to help children learn through their play. Children behave well and respond confidently to the consistent good role models displayed by the staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care is taken to record all the details necessary to meet the individual needs of children and their families and staff are always accessible to discuss any issues with parents. This means that staff know the children well and parents feel informed and included in the care and development of their children. Good systems are in place and staff work in close partnership with parents and others to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to benefit from attending the setting. Children are learning about the wider world and different lifestyles through a well-planned and resourced range of activities. For example, the use of meal times to explore different diets and cultural practices and celebrating significant events in the lives of others. Children are learning to manage their own behaviour, for example, they keep simple rules, such as helping to tidy toys, sharing and taking turns and respond happily to reminders from staff when needed. They are delighted to wear stickers that inform they have tried new tastes, helped to tidy or show kindness to others.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They behave well and show concern for each other. They are learning about their community and the wider world and are developing a real sense of belonging and self-esteem.

The partnership with parents and carers for nursery education is good. Parents receive comprehensive information about the playgroup and the Foundation Stage of learning. A summary of all policies and procedures is included in the setting prospectus and parents are informed that full documentation and their children's records are readily accessible to them. Parents are asked to share what they know about their child's stage of learning and development when they enter funded education and regularly during their time at the group. This means that staff build on parent's input to effectively progress children's learning. Parents are welcomed at the group and report that they feel involved and included in their children's development and learning. They receive regular newsletters and are invited to open sessions at least once each term. Information and activities are provided to parents so that they can help their children learn at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is effectively promoted by the well-organised environment. Robust systems are in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff which ensures that adults working with the children or having access to them are appropriately qualified and suitable to do so. Staff take care to establish positive relationships with the children and their parents which means they know the children well. The environment is arranged imaginatively to offer stimulating play and learning opportunities for all children which means they have confidence to take part in activities and their enjoyment and self-esteem is fostered effectively. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and most documents in the comprehensive range of policies and procedures support the safe and efficient management of the setting. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The quality of leadership and management for the nursery education is good. The leader is knowledgeable and has positive vision about how to provide a quality service to children and their parents to meet their individual needs. She effectively organises her staff and resources to plan and provide positive opportunities for children to make good progress. The leader knows her staff well and promotes training opportunities for them to keep up to date and continually improve their knowledge and practice. However, the management have not fully established effective systems to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. This means that the setting does not evaluate the overall effectiveness of the delivery of nursery education.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to ensure that the qualification criterion for managers and staff is met and that staff keep up to date with changes in early years practice. The record of attendance confirms that the required ratio of qualified staff is maintained at all times and staff have embraced appropriate training to inform and improve their practice. However, a recommendation has been made to secure further improvement by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

At the last nursery inspection the provider agreed to improve the use of the assessment of children's progress to inform planning and to ensure that systems covered all areas of the stepping stones. Clear records are maintained to inform planning and demonstrate that all aspects of the stepping stones are covered regularly and consistently and a recommendation has been made to secure further improvement. The provider agreed to develop systems to monitor and evaluate the educational provision more effectively. Some improvement has been achieved because that manager and staff have established systems within the setting to assess and evaluate activities and areas for development and a recommendation has been made to secure further improvement.

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 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 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):

- obtain parents written permission to transport children
- review the child protection procedures to inform that the procedures followed are in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- secure outcomes by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

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 assessments are used to inform planning in order to set clear challenges for children's next steps in learning
- ensure that systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the delivery of the nursery education.

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