

# Hemingford Grey Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	221857
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 February 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Caroline Wright
<b>Setting Address</b>	St. Ives Road, Hemingford Grey, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 9DU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01480 496 141
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Committee of Hemingford Grey Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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](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 good. 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?

Hemingford Grey Playgroup is run by a management committee made up of parents of children at the playgroup. It opened in 1974 and operates from a mobile building in the grounds of Hemingford Grey Primary School in Cambridgeshire. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time.

The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00, with an optional 'lunch club' from 12.00 to 13.00. On Tuesdays and Thursdays a pre-school session is available for older children from 13.00 to 15.00 and on Wednesdays a playgroup session is available from 13.00 to 15.00. The setting operates during term times only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 50 children aged from two to under five-years on roll. Of these, 32 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs five members of staff to work with the children. Four of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications; two of the staff are working towards qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children develop a good knowledge and understanding of personal hygiene through regular routines such as washing their hands before eating. They know that washing your hands is essential otherwise 'you get germs in your belly and they make you sick.' Staff act as good role models, wiping down surfaces before serving snack and after children have eaten to help children to stay healthy. A very good cleaning rota is in place and regularly reviewed, with responsibilities for tasks clearly identified. Consequently, all areas of the premises are very clean and this helps to protect children from cross-infection and illness.

Children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday, practical experiences. They are able to run around and exert themselves, either in the school grounds or in their own outdoor play area, so that they learn the importance of regular fresh air and exercise. They develop new physical skills such as running or jumping and riding bikes or scooters. They are aware of changes that occur in their bodies due to physical exertion and comment 'I'm hot' when they have been running around or 'I'm freezing' when they come indoors on cold wintry days. However, the outdoor play area is not freely accessible to children in the winter. This impacts upon children's physical development.

Children learn about healthy eating during discussion with staff at snack time. The healthy eating policy demonstrates a commitment to providing children with fresh fruit or other healthy options to eat at snack time. Children are able to help themselves to a drink of water when they want one so that they remain well hydrated and can think effectively. The nurse visits the playgroup to help children to learn about the importance of caring for their bodies and staff follow up with 'hospital' role play so that children can consolidate their learning through practical experiences.

The needs of children under three-years are well met by adults who have a good understanding of their developmental needs. Children are able to take a rest in the comfortable book corner when they want to. A good range of large and small equipment inside and out enables children to develop new physical skills according to their stage of development. They handle small pieces of construction toys competently and use the mouse on the computer, printing pads and other tools, developing co-ordination and manipulative dexterity.

If the children become unwell or have an accident whilst they are in the care of the playgroup, up to date records are in place to make sure that good care is given. A very good system is in place to make sure that children with existing illnesses or allergies are well cared for. Staff place a photograph of these children on their individual medication files, which significantly reduces the risk of them being given the wrong medicines in error.

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

The provision is good.

Children move around safely under the constant supervision of the playgroup staff. They learn how to keep themselves safe, waiting for their turn to come down the slide so that they do not bump into each other. Stair gates and high-level locks prevent children from accessing areas that are not safe or leaving the premises without adult supervision. In addition, the playgroup has its own enclosed outdoor play area with a covered area to offer shade on sunny days, which contributes towards children's safety outdoors. Children learn about staying safe outside the setting, talking with fire officers about personal safety. Key workers build on these visits with the provision of role play activities and suitable resources to enable children to dress up as fire fighters to practise what they have learned. Staff help children to learn about road safety through practical experiences such as making a life sized 'lolly-pop' to remind them to cross the road with the crossing patrol warden when they come to playgroup in the mornings.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by staff who have a good understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff attend regular training and two designated persons co-ordinate all safeguarding procedures. They keep good records of any worries about children's welfare and are confident to refer these concerns to the appropriate professionals.

The daily risk assessment of the premises, which adults carry out before each session begins, is effective in addressing any potential hazard to children's safety. A wide range of written policies and appropriate procedures are in place, including regular fire drills, to help children know what to do in the case of an emergency evacuation of the premises. Children select resources that are appropriate for their age and stage of development, and these are checked regularly by the playgroup staff to ensure they are in good condition and are safe.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy at the playgroup and generally enjoy their play. They use a suitable range of construction materials over time, such as 'Duplo' and 'Stickle-bricks' to make cars and magnifying glasses with the help of their key workers. They use tools such as paint brushes to paint pictures and pastry cutters or rolling pins in the dough. Children enjoy drawing with pencils and felt-tips, making meaningful marks and developing new physical skills. Staff plan interesting activities to help children to learn about new textures and materials through their play. For example, staff provide wet or dry sand with diggers and scoops, ice cubes or autumn leaves for children to explore.

Adults working with the under-three's carry out regular observations of children and use these to assess children's progress. They use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to guide their practice and clear links are made in both planning and assessment procedures to each of the aspects and components so that they can ensure that a balanced programme of activities is provided. However, they do not use their observations of what children enjoy to plan activities that offer interest for all children or to enable individuals to explore their preferred learning environment. This affects their ability to pursue their own interests and impacts on their behaviour.

## **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Children play together in groups and engage in conversations, responding to each other's ideas. For example, when playing with the dolls they talk about going to the shops, sharing a narrative and playing together in the same theme. They eagerly use the available dressing up materials to extend their narratives. For example, boys dress up as 'Batman and 'Spiderman', searching for 'robbers' and 'baddies' to 'sort out.' Children enjoy drawing and key workers write children's comments onto the pictures to help children to understand that marks on paper have meaning. This helps them to develop early writing skills in the future. They enjoy looking at books and turn the pages carefully, from front to back, retelling their favourite stories to each other. They demonstrate that they recognise familiar words such as their own name when they find their name card at registration.

They use number names and mathematical language such as 'more' and 'enough' when they pour their own drink at snack time. They talk about 'too much children in the sand' or 'not enough space' at the table, demonstrating a secure knowledge of space and measure. They count the number of pencils as they play with their key workers and recognise numbers to five when they play on the computer. Children enjoy using the everyday technology such as a camera or play cooker in their play. They use the mouse and keyboard to complete simple programmes on the computer. Children eagerly join in with singing familiar songs and clap their hands to follow a rhythm. They have suitable opportunities to explore musical instruments and to express their ideas in role play, music and movement. They talk about their families and home lives with understanding, showing a good sense of time and place. They identify features of the natural world and know that 'fish and ducks live in the pond...sharks live in the sea.' They take part in activities that help them to learn about patterns and changes in the natural environment. For example, during topics they talk about how tadpoles change into frogs and learn about autumn when they take photographs of trees in the village or create hand-print 'leaves' in their artwork.

However, children do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills or to learn about calculating through daily routines and play situations; their listening skills are not well promoted. For example, staff count the number of children present each morning, missing opportunities to calculate 'how many?' or to talk about 'more' or 'less'. Adults do not always provide writing materials in the role play area to enable children to write for a purpose in their play. As a result, older or more able children are unchallenged and opportunities to extend children's learning through practical experiences are missed. Although staff take children to visit the library regularly and encourage children to share books with their parents at home, they are not effective in encouraging children to listen to joint story sessions. This affects children's ability to develop essential listening skills that will enable them to hear differences between sounds and letters in the future. Children's ability to explore a wide range of media and materials and to develop their creativity is limited. Although adults plan art and craft activities into the programme regularly they do not always make sure that essential resources such as glue or scissors are available for children to use freely on a daily basis so that they can develop their designing and making skills independently. This limits progress.

Planning for activities is clearly linked to the stepping stones and the early learning goals. Staff carry out daily observations of children at activities and use these to monitor children's progress. They identify gaps in children's assessment records to plan the next steps for learning for individual children. However, the planning and assessment process does not cover all of the stepping stones until the final term of the school year and as a result some activities lack challenge. This limits progress for older and more able children. In addition, staff do not yet use their observations of what children enjoy to plan activities. As a result, some children are

uninterested during the session, particularly when they are restricted to the indoor environment, and wander around looking for something to do. During these times, their behaviour becomes disruptive and this hinders learning.

All of the staff working with funded children are suitably qualified and experienced. They are secure in their understanding of the Foundation Stage and activities are generally well presented. However, 'key focus activities' are sometimes too adult-led and the use of templates for art and craft activities impacts on children's ability to explore their creativity and limits challenge for older or more able children. This impacts upon children's progress.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet key workers and each other upon arrival at the playgroup. They are confident and show positive self esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They work together co-operatively during activities, helping to tidy away resources and they know that 'we have to share, don't we?' Adults carefully explain what they expect children to do in a way that they can understand, to help children to behave appropriately. Staff encourage children to respect each other's needs and to use conventions such as 'please' and 'thank-you', acting as positive role models themselves. Children's daily access to resources that reflect diversity and help them to learn about other members of society through their play is satisfactory. In addition, children talk with each other at activities about their families and informal discussions enable them to talk about what they do at home so that they learn about each other's family cultures and traditions. Staff use topics such as 'all about me' to get to know children and their families and they plan interesting activities to celebrate a suitable range of cultural and religious festivals, which helps children to develop a positive attitude towards diversity.

Children move around the room freely, choosing from the activities provided by staff and selecting resources from the drawer units with confidence. However, they are not able to access the outdoor play area independently and this impacts upon their ability to develop new skills in their preferred learning environment. As a result, those children who are uninterested in the activities provided indoors become unchallenged and bored: this affects behaviour and hinders learning. Some group activities such as story time do not promote positive behaviour because adults fail to capture children's interest and older children are distracted by younger children who are wandering around the room getting ready to go home. This impacts on learning.

A suitable system is in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they make good progress. Staff have attended a wide range of training in how to support children with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff work effectively with parents to support children who speak English as an additional language so that they become confident communicators.

A successful key-worker system enables parents to share information when their children start at the setting and they are confident to talk informally with adults on a daily basis to discuss their children's individual needs. Parents receive regular information about playgroup activities in newsletters and on the notice board, so that they are well informed about the playgroup activities. Parents regularly take part in the 'parent helper rota', working alongside staff in the playgroup and helping children in activities. Parents are invited to share their skills in playgroup sessions and to join in with a range of social and community activities. This helps children and their families to develop a strong sense of belonging and helps children to settle into the

playgroup easily. A suitable procedure is in place to enable parents to raise concerns about the provision if they need to.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Positive relationships effectively support children's care and contribute to the progress of children who receive early education. Parents and carers are invited to comment on regular written reports of children's progress and these comments are used to inform children's ongoing records of achievement. Key workers keep parents informed of each child's 'next steps' so that parents can support children's learning at home. A regular questionnaire is provided for parents and carers to comment upon the provision and includes children's views on the playgroup. Staff use parents comments to inform changes to their practice. This enables children's individual needs to be met and ensures that parents are well informed. Parents are well informed about the Early Learning Goals and how activities provided contribute towards children's progress. They are able to look at plans for the sessions and are provided with ideas on how to support their children's learning at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The play environment is well organised and attractive, promoting positive outcomes for children. Children access a wide range of activities and help themselves to resources from the low-level shelving and drawer units so that they become independent and learn to make decisions. The management committee uses rigorous recruitment procedures to ensure that all staff are well experienced and suitable to work with children. They delegate the day to day running of the setting to a manager, who uses her sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn, to lead the enthusiastic and dedicated staff team. The induction programme and comprehensive operational plan, with up to date information for staff, makes sure that all members of the team are secure in their knowledge of procedures for child protection and maintaining children's overall safety. All of the legally required documents, which contribute to children's health, safety and well-being, are in place. Staff work together at team meetings to review policies and procedures to develop their understanding of the National Standards and to focus on how they promote positive outcomes for children.

The leadership and management of funded nursery education is satisfactory. Regular staff and management meetings ensure that everyone works together as a team to review practice and share knowledge and skills. Although the manager has implemented new systems for observing and assessing children's progress these need further development. The manager and staff are proactive in identifying areas to secure future development in the future and the self evaluation process has been effective in identifying areas for changes to practice. However, the monitoring system is not effective in ensuring that the programme for funded education meets children's individual learning needs or promotes positive behaviour. This compromises the quality of teaching and learning.

Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to improve the child protection statement, risk assessment procedure and behaviour management. They also agreed to ensure that whole-group activities meet children's needs, improve hand washing at snack time, update the complaints procedure and make sure that written policies meet the requirements of the National Standards. The child protection procedure now contains a procedure to be followed in the event of an

allegation against a member of staff or volunteer; the risk assessment is reviewed and updated regularly so that all risks are minimised; staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management, explaining carefully to children what they expect them to do in a way that they can understand. In addition, changes to the session mean that children do not engage in whole group activities that do not meet their needs. All written policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and now meet requirements, including the procedure informing parents of how they can make a complaint to the regulator if they need to. This has improved children's overall safety and well-being.

At the last inspection of funded education the provider agreed to provide opportunities for children to count and solve problems in everyday activities and to ensure that planning shows how the six areas of learning are covered. Children have opportunities to count at registration, although this activity lacks focus and children do not always listen to what the adult has to say at this time. They have opportunities to count when they engage in one-to-one activities with their key workers and they solve problems when they help to tidy away resources, deciding whether crates are 'full' or 'too heavy' for them to carry alone. Plans now have clear links to the early learning goals and areas of learning. However, they do not cover all of the stepping stones effectively and this affects learning and challenge for older or more able children. This issue will be carried forward as a recommendation following this inspection.

### **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 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 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):

- improve the system for planning and assessing children's progress: use key workers' observations of what children enjoy and do well to plan activities that offer interest and meet individual children's learning needs (this also applies to nursery education).

#### **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):

- improve the system for planning and assessment to make sure that stepping stones are used effectively to promote adequate challenge for older and more able children and to ensure that key focus activities provide appropriate challenge through practical experiences
- improve children's ability to develop their ideas in art and design, learn about calculation and improve their listening and writing skills through everyday routines, play situations and easy access to suitable media and materials
- improve children's access to the outdoor play area to make effective use of the learning opportunities available and to improve behaviour: support children's ability to pursue their own interests and to explore their preferred learning environment easily.

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)