

# Happy Days Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	256767
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jean Suff
<b>Setting Address</b>	Stafford Hall Community Centre, Hampton Court, Westwood, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE3 7LD
<b>Telephone number</b>	07731656601
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Happy Days 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?

Happy Days Playgroup opened over 35 years ago. It operates from one main room in a community building in Westwood, on the outskirts of Peterborough. Happy Days Playgroup serves the local area. There are currently 19 children from two years and six months old to five years old on roll. This includes 10 funded three-year-olds and no funded four-year-olds at present. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The group opens five days a week during school term-times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 11:45. Currently three full-time and one part-time members of staff work with the children. Half of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting has experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are a number of children on roll who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup receives support from the Early Years Development and Child Care partnership.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and hygienic environment and develop personal hygiene skills through daily routines. For example, children wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating and staff act as suitable role models as they wash their own hands and clean tables using antibacterial spray. However, children are at some risk of cross-infection as staff do not check that children use hot water and soap when washing their hands or always provide individual hand drying facilities. The setting has a range of policies and procedures that promote children's good health. For example, accident records are maintained and are signed by parents. Staff have attended relevant first aid training and a suitably equipped first aid box is readily available. Therefore, staff are able to respond positively should a child have an accident or become unwell whilst at the playgroup. Appropriate information is shared with parents to help monitor and support children's well-being.

Snack time is a sociable occasion when children and staff sit and chat together, although staff do not encourage children to make healthy choices about what they eat. For example, staff mostly offer sweet biscuits with no alternative. Once a week parents send fruit to playgroup which staff cut into pieces and children share that day. This balance does not sufficiently promote healthy eating for children. Children have a drink of milk, squash or water with their snack and in addition have free-access to drinking water to ensure they do not become thirsty whilst at the playgroup.

Children participate in outdoor play and physical activities in dry weather on a grassed area so learn the benefits of fresh air. They run, climb, steer wheeled vehicles and play games together. Indoors, children balance on beams, play 'follow my leader' whilst playing instruments and cooperate when using a parachute, so develop their coordination and large muscle skills. However, at present large physical activities are not planned to offer challenge for older and more able children to extend their skills. Children learn to effectively use tools and equipment that help to develop small muscle skills and their hand to eye coordination. For example, they use scissors, glue sticks, cutters and fastenings on clothes. Although staff are sensitive to children's level of development, opportunities for children to develop new physical skills at activities are not planned for and therefore are missed. For example, staff prepare children's snacks and provide children with pre-cut materials at sticking activities.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health and safety is given high priority by staff. Children are cared for in a safe environment where most risks are identified and minimised so that children are able to move around safely and independently, both indoors and outside. Staff carefully monitor the arrival and collection of children and are vigilant during the session. A daily check of the premises is carried out at the beginning of each session to ensure all areas used by the children are safe. However, a record of visitors to the playgroup is not consistently kept which compromises children's safety. Children are developing a sense of keeping themselves safe as they practise the fire drill and talk with staff about using equipment safely.

Staff work hard each morning to provide an environment that is welcoming to children, parents and carers. Children select from a range of activities and resources which support their play.

Staff respond positively to requests for further resources which are not immediately available to allow children to follow their own interests. Resources and equipment are regularly checked by staff to ensure they are in good condition and safe for children to use. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a sound understanding of their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Staff are aware of signs and symptoms of abuse and are familiar with the local child protection guidelines for protecting children.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children attending the playgroup settle well and soon engage in activities with purpose. Younger children start to gain confidence because staff are attentive and support their emotional needs through sensitive interaction and contact. Children therefore feel secure and are able to explore the room and engage in play and learning. They have opportunities to be active or relax according to their needs and enjoy both indoor and outside play. Staff take account of the 'Birth to three matters' framework when providing activities for younger children.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the early learning goals and understand that children learn through play and practical experience. They use their knowledge to provide a variety of structured activities that cover most areas of learning. However, planning is informal, does not always have clear learning intentions and lacks guidance for staff to ensure that children are appropriately challenged. Although staff make observations and assessments of children's development these are not sufficiently frequent or used to plan and provide for children's next steps in learning. Staff know children well and they use an appropriate range of methods to consolidate and extend learning. For example, they use open-ended questions with children and encourage them to try a new experience. Staff manage children well and have high expectations for behaviour, giving clear boundaries and sensitive, age-appropriate explanations for routines. Staff provide a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities at each session although they do not always make effective use of resources. For example, they provide coreactivities such as the garage and cars without additional resources to support and extend children's ongoing play and learning. Children are sometimes grouped according to stage of development, for example, for story to enhance enjoyment and learning.

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup and mostly show sound levels of interest and concentration in their play. They are confident to leave their carers and may choose to play alone or with others. Children enjoy talking with their friends and show developing positive relationships. Children work cooperatively together, for example, by pushing each other when using wheeled vehicles. They are developing satisfactory levels of independence, for example, with their personal care for toileting and washing.

Children have adequate opportunities to develop language skills through sharing books and talking to one another and staff. They are encouraged to extend their vocabulary at activities and, through the use of sound games and rhymes, are beginning to link sounds and letters together. They are able to see print around them and a book corner encourages children to develop good reading habits. They start to recognise their own name, for example, when seeing their name card at self-registration. Children have some opportunities for mark making. For example, they paint and draw and older children have a go at naming their own work. Children

count objects and recognise numbers during routine activities such as at registration time or during play such as when they score in a game. Children have opportunities to learn about shape and measure through activities such as model making, water and sand play.

A variety of adult-led and own choice activities help children to learn about the world around them. They talk about the weather and know which clothing is appropriate for particular weather. They talk about their home lives and experiences. Children thoroughly enjoy a music session that includes both adult-led and spontaneous instrument playing. They sing songs and join in with well known rhymes. They enjoy junk modelling and building with construction set. Children are introduced to a variety of creative techniques to help them learn about colour, form and texture. For example, they engage in finger painting and printing. They use their imagination during role play, recreating from personal experience.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are friendly and attentive in their dealings with children, so helping them to feel confident and at ease. Children work harmoniously together and are able to exercise some choice from a selection of activities and resources put out. Children are encouraged to develop independence and take responsibility through routine tasks such as tidying up and passing materials to each other. Children behave well in different circumstances, for example, as they sit sociably together at snack time and march in a line whilst playing instruments. This is because staff provide a good role model of positive behaviour, giving praise and encouragement and showing concern for children and each other.

Staff take regard of information about children's specific care needs, so ensuring individuality is recognised and individual needs can be met. Children are helped to recognise and respect individual needs, differences and similarities, for example through listening to stories. They begin to learn about different cultures and religions through activities such as eating foods for particular celebrations. Children learn about their local community through visits to the local shop. The setting has experience of caring for children with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff understand the need to liaise with parents and other relevant professionals with regard to such provision. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are happy and settled because they see staff building positive relationships with parents and carers. Prospective parents receive a prospectus giving information about arrangements for children's care. Relevant policies and procedures are readily available for parents to see so that they know what to expect from the playgroup. Opportunities for informal discussion at the start and end of the session enable staff and parents to share relevant information on children's experiences and activities. Staff know children and families very well ensuring good continuity of care for children, and parents are very supportive of the setting. An up to date written complaints procedure is in place.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is satisfactory. Information about the Foundation Stage is on display in the hall for parents to see. Parents receive information about playgroup activities on an informal basis, so that they can support their child's learning at home. Parents are able to access children's developmental records if they wish and staff are available for formal appointments to discuss children's progress.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The room is organised into designated areas to encourage children to engage in various types of play. For example, they may choose to sit at the creative table, be at one of the many playmats or move freely in the large space given over to physical activities and role play. Staff deployment is arranged prior to each session to confirm responsibilities, aid group activities and support children's care and play. Good adult to child ratios provide children with suitable levels of individual attention when needed which helps them to feel secure. The setting has a range of policies and procedures, which are accessible to parents, that are designed to keep children healthy and maintain their well-being. The playgroup has sufficient staff with relevant childcare qualifications and experience to support the care and welfare of children.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The supervisor and deputy have an overview of the planning for nursery education and staff have regular opportunities to meet as a team. However, they have not yet developed a workable system to effectively evaluate and monitor the use of the Foundation Stage guidance, the methods for observation and assessment and service delivery. This potentially compromises the quality and development of nursery education. The management have informally reviewed some aspects of the playgroup and have implemented a key worker system to help monitor children's progress and build closer links with parents. They have improved the resources to support and extend the learning experiences for the children. Staff receive information about relevant training courses and participate in some professional development training. Staff have strong feelings about what they do and are committed to improving the care and education of children. The setting receives ongoing support from the local area mentor teacher. Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the playgroup was required to put in place a number of policies and procedures to bring the setting in line with current regulations. These requirements have now been met therefore the care, welfare and safety of children is enhanced.

At the last nursery inspection the playgroup was required to provide increased opportunities for children to link sounds to letters and say initial sounds and also provide increased opportunities for children to self-select resources to express their own ideas through art and craft activities. The setting now provides a variety of activities through the daily routine that encourage children to use letters and sounds and has also purchased some storage units that allow children access to resources.

The playgroup was also required to develop the planning and assessment process to ensure that short term plans are linked to the six areas of learning and that the assessment system shows how to move children onto the next steps and inform future planning. Although planning and assessment systems have been in place previously, they are at present under review and are not fully in place for the children currently attending at the time of the inspection. Therefore a further recommendation referring to planning, assessment and children's progress has been raised.

## **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 by 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):

- take positive steps to minimise the spread of infection with reference to the provision of hand drying facilities
- improve the nutritional content of snacks offered to children
- ensure a record of visitors is consistently kept.

#### **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):

- develop the planning and assessment process to ensure that short term plans cover the six areas of learning and provide appropriate challenge for all children, and that the assessment system shows how to move children on to the next steps in their learning.

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)