



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 149665

DfES Number: 546093

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 06/12/2004

Inspector Name Marie Tyler

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care

Setting Name Walkern Playgroup

Setting Address C/O Walkern Primary School  
Walkern  
Stevenage  
Hertfordshire  
SG2 7NS

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Walkern Playgroup

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Walkern Playgroup

Address Walkern Primary School  
Walkern  
Stevenage  
Hertfordshire  
SG2 7NS

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

### Information about the setting

Walkern Playgroup opened in 1991 and operates from a mobile classroom situated in the grounds of Walkern Primary School in Walkern, Hertfordshire.

A maximum of 22 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open during school term time on each weekday morning from 09:05 until 11:50 and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 12:30 until 15:00. All the children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a local catchment area. The playgroup currently supports one child with special educational needs.

The playgroup employs 5 staff. Three of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

### How good is the Day Care?

Walkern Playgroup provides satisfactory care for children.

The premises are bright and well maintained. Staff are aware of the importance of health and hygiene. They take sensible precautions to keep children safe and suitable policies and procedures inform daily practice. However one safety issue needs to be reviewed.

Children are lively, cheerful and busy. They enjoy an interesting range of stimulating activities, toys and play materials and there are varied opportunities for physical play. The group have started to develop the enclosed grass outdoor playground and children also use the nearby enclosed hard play area or the school hall.

Children relate well to staff and to each other. Good behaviour is valued and encouraged and staff give children positive support throughout the session. Children are generally well behaved and relations between staff and children are friendly and

relaxed.

Policies and procedures are clear and comprehensive. These are reviewed at regular intervals and only one policy needs to be updated. A copy of the policies and procedures, the regular newsletters and a home/school book provide good information for parents. Staff have friendly relationships with parents and the very positive response to Ofsted Questionnaires indicates how much parents appreciate the provision and the opportunities it offers to their children.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

At the last inspection the management agreed to devise a plan to make sure the furniture, toys, equipment and the premises are safe, to provide an emergency escape procedure, make sure fire detection and control equipment is available and to include Ofsted's telephone number and address in the complaints procedure.

The group have successfully addressed all these issues to promote children's safety within the setting and to provide information for parents.

#### **What is being done well?**

- Children are secure and settled in this cheerful welcoming environment. They move confidently between different activities and enjoy interesting play. They listen attentively to stories and sing action songs with enthusiasm. They play with or alongside each other, understand the daily routine and help to tidy up for snack or story. When they are together in a group the children chat readily to each other and to staff.
- Relations between staff and children are mutually respectful and affectionate. The joint managers share overall responsibility for day to day management and staff work together to support and encourage the children throughout the session. All staff are very aware of individual needs. Children with special needs are given adult support where necessary with the intention of helping children with different needs to integrate into the group.
- Relations between staff and parents are relaxed and friendly and there is an informal exchange of information at the beginning and end of each session. The parents interviewed at this inspection are confident that the staff know their children well. They appreciate the home/school book which staff complete each day and many parents add their comments and observations to this record.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- safety with reference to the front door
- documentation with reference to procedures for emergency medical treatment and the policy for child protection

**PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)**

There are no complaints to report

**Outcome of the inspection**

Satisfactory

**CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION**

*All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.*

*As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.*

**WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**

**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
6	make sure that premises are secure with reference to the front door
14	make sure that written records include permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and the child protection policy includes the procedure to be followed in the event that an allegation is made against a member of staff

## INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

### How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Walkern Playgroup is good. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and in mathematical development and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. They plan interesting and varied activities and experiences to promote children's learning in all areas of the Foundation Stage. Plans for specific activities are detailed, clearly linked to the stepping stones and children's learning is carefully evaluated. Many whole group activities are exciting, fun and fully engage children's interest but some need to be more carefully structured to meet the different learning needs of all the children in the group.

Staff organise an attractive classroom with opportunities for stimulating everyday activities. However, these activities are not obviously linked to clear learning intentions and the children do not make full use of these everyday opportunities for learning through play and exploration.

Leadership and management is generally good. Staff work very well together as a team. They share planning and delivery of the curriculum and all are involved in assessing children's learning. Staff have good support from the management committee who prioritise staff training and development and encourage staff to identify their own training needs.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents say that the keyworker system and the home/school book are especially helpful and they appreciate the formal written report sent home twice each year. The daily book loan scheme also gives parents the opportunity to promote their children's interest in books. The notice board and regular newsletters provide useful information but there are few opportunities for parents to obtain information about the Foundation Stage and early learning goals.

### What is being done well?

- Staff have very good relationships with children and their families. They provide the children with good role models, demonstrating consideration for others and respect for individual needs. This has a very positive effect on children's behaviour. Established daily routines contribute to the children's sense of security and children's individual achievements are celebrated and valued.
- Staff work very well together as a team and all work directly with the children. Staff support children's learning with appropriate questions and positive, consistent interaction throughout the session and work closely with parents and other agencies to support children with special needs.

- The joint managers are ably supported by experienced staff and the management committee. The classroom, resources and all documentation are well organised. The effective teamwork together with good overall and daily organisation supports children's learning and personal development.

**What needs to be improved?**

- Planning for everyday activities to clearly show learning intention for all children
- Information for parents on the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

**What has improved since the last inspection?**

Not applicable.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are friendly and generally confident. They behave well, understand and follow the daily routine and help each other to tidy up. They are keen to help, giving out bowls or cups at snack time and they take turns in singing or board games. They explore theme and topic work with obvious interest and their understanding of the wider community is fostered in local projects e.g. to support the local branch of 'Help the Aged'

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children readily engage in conversation. They enjoy stories, handle books carefully and use books to retell familiar stories. They discuss books with staff and learn to evaluate books they borrow. Children's emergent writing is recognised, valued and encouraged. Most children are keen to write and the many opportunities to make marks include blackboards fixed to the garden fence. However, some activities to develop skills in linking sounds and letters need to be planned more carefully.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children count and recognise numbers for practical purposes at circle and snack times and in response to staff questions and encouragement in other activities. Resources for counting and number recognition are readily available in the classroom and in the garden where children enjoy exploring and devising games with the numbers pegged to a line. Designs for gift wrapping paper, games and computer programmes help to develop children's understanding of pattern, shape and position.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children develop an understanding of the natural world and their local environment as they explore the garden for signs of seasonal change, talk about the weather or plant seeds. They are beginning to develop an understanding of different cultures with celebrations of Dwali and Christmas. They have good support to develop skill and competence when using the computer. However they need to have more opportunities to design and construct, select resources and use tools.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move confidently and demonstrate an awareness of space as they negotiate their way around the classroom. They use tools in some creative activities. Outdoors they pedal tricycles, push themselves on scooters, throw and catch, climb up to use the slide and have opportunities to run and jump. However opportunities to discuss the effects of this physical activity are not always fully explored.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children use a wide range of media to explore colour, shape and texture. They sing songs with obvious enthusiasm. They explore sound and music with musical instruments and tapes and experiment with the 'sound line' in the garden. This is hung with various metal objects and bells for children to beat or shake. However opportunities for imaginative and role play need to be more effectively planned to encourage children to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas.	

**Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.**



## **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

## **WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES**

- Make sure plans for everyday activities include learning outcomes linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals in the Foundation Stage Curriculum with particular reference to group activities linking sounds and letters, opportunities for design and construction and opportunities for imaginative and role play.
- Extend the partnership with parents by providing information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum, including learning objectives for themes and topics

*The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.*

## **SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS**

### **STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON**

*Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.*

### **STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION**

*The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.*

### **STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY**

*The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.*

### **STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

*The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.*

### **STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT**

*Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.*

### **STANDARD 6 - SAFETY**

*The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.*

### **STANDARD 7 - HEALTH**

*The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.*

### **STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK**

*Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.*

### **STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

*The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.*

### **STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)**

*The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is*

*proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.*

#### **STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR**

*Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.*

#### **STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS**

*The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.*

#### **STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION**

*The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.*

#### **STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION**

*Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.*