



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY243072

DfES Number: 533732

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 22/11/2004  
Inspector Name Jackie Nation

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care  
Setting Name Thorns Playgroup  
Setting Address Thorns Road  
Brierley Hill  
West Midlands  
DY5 2JY

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Thorns Playgroup Committee 1037938

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Thorns Playgroup Committee  
Address Thorns Road  
Brierley Hill  
West Midlands  
DY5 2JY

## 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

Thorns Playgroup opened in 1989 and operates from a self-contained mobile building within the ground of Thorns Primary School, in Brierley Hill, West Midlands.

A maximum of 18 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11:30 and 13:00 to 15:00 during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and they are able to use the computer suite within the school.

There are currently 28 children aged from 2 to 5 years on roll, of these 20 children receive funding for nursery education. Children who attend come from the local community. The group supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group employs seven staff. Four staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. They receive the support of a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

### How good is the Day Care?

Thorns Playgroup provides good quality care for children.

Staff provide a welcoming environment by greeting children and parents on arrival. Children's work is well displayed and there is a notice board for parents and policy information in the entrance area. All aspects of the provision are well organised and there are areas where children can play imaginatively or relax and look at books. Children have access to an outside play area and they also enjoy their visits to the computer suite in the school. Children benefit from consistent routines and a committed well established staff team. Staff ratios are good, however an action plan is required to ensure the deputy has an appropriate qualification. All required documentation is in place, however the policy for lost and uncollected children is not sufficiently detailed.

Staff are vigilant about children's safety and good arrangements are in place at arrival and departure times. Staff promote good hygiene practices with the children through daily routines. Children are provided with healthy snacks and drinks. Staff are committed to inclusion and meeting children's individual needs. They have a good awareness of child protection and know who to contact if they have any concerns.

Staff have a warm rapport with the children and encourage children to join in activities. Staff know the children well and children enjoy the range of planned activities provided for them which support their play and learning. Children explore a range of materials, play imaginatively, they like listening to stories and playing outside. Children behave well and respond to the staff's realistic expectations and their calm and relaxed manner. Children play well together and enjoy being helpful.

Partnership with parents is good, there are clear arrangements in place and regular opportunities to exchange information about activities and children's progress.

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

Not applicable, as no actions were raised at the previous Inspection.

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

- The staff team are committed and knowledgeable and this ensures that children who attend the setting are well cared for.
- The environment is friendly and welcoming, staff know the children well and interaction is good. Children receive praise and encouragement for their achievements.
- Children are provided with well-planned activities which promote their learning and play in all areas of their development. Children play co-operatively in small groups or individually. There are a good range of resources to support children's progress and development.
- There is a strong emphasis on equal opportunities and children's individual needs are positively acknowledged.

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

- the arrangements for ensuring the deputy manager attains a level 3 qualification
- the policy for lost and uncollected children.

#### **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**

Good

**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
2	Develop and implement an action plan that sets out how Deputy Manager will achieve a level 3 qualification.
14	Improve the procedures for lost and uncollected children.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Thorns Playgroup provides generally good quality nursery education. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in the areas of communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world and very good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good, with some very good aspects which include effective questioning and interactions. Staff plan a good range of activities and understand what children are expected to learn from them. Learning is not always maximised in the areas of communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world, children do not always have the opportunity to self select activities and resources, to promote further independent learning. Observations of children are used to inform future planning. Staff encourage children to understand values and codes of behaviour, they encourage children to work together and have consideration of others. Procedures are in place to support children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

Leadership and management of the setting is very good. Staff work well as a team and are enthusiastic, flexible and clear about their role. The manager is clear about the aims of the setting and fully committed to improve the quality of education. Regular staff meetings and appraisals are held. There is provision for ongoing training and development of staff.

Partnership with parents is very good. Staff have good relationships with parents and show knowledge of children's home and family circumstances. Parents receive a welcome pack which includes information about the Foundation Stage. There are regular opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress with staff and parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. Parents are encouraged to share information about their child on entry, which is used to help children settle.

### What is being done well?

- There are clear routines in place and staff support children well which helps them feel secure and confident. Children are sociable and have caring relationships with each other.
- Children develop positive attitudes to learning, they are motivated and want to learn. They are able to concentrate and persevere with more difficult tasks.
- Staff help children to understand values and codes of behaviour, they encourage children to work together and have consideration of others.
- Children are confident speakers who are encouraged by staff's interest and engagement in their play and conversation.

- Staff are good role models, they create a well resourced learning environment where children are encouraged to try new experiences and develop skills.

**What needs to be improved?**

- the opportunities for children to self select activities and resources
- the attention given to increasing children's awareness of linking sounds and letters
- the use of resources to increase children's understanding of how things work and why things happen.

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

Not applicable, as this is the first inspection of the settings nursery education for funded children.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident, work well independently and in small groups. Children are sociable and are developing caring relationships with each other. Older children help younger children during activities and all children have positive attitudes to learning. They are able to concentrate and maintain attention at appropriate times. Children understand shared rules and use 'sand timers' to regulate their time for certain activities or wait to take their turn.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers and express themselves through play and conversations which foster their language and literacy skills. They talk about their experiences at circle time and listen and respond with enjoyment to stories and songs. Children are aware that print carries meaning and access books independently. Most children recognise their own name. Older children are able to write their name, but there are insufficient opportunities for children to link sounds to letters.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

All children show an interest in numbers and counting. They are using and developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. They measure and compare during varied activities and daily routines. Children count confidently up to 10 and some beyond, they are able to recognise numerals 1-9. Children talk confidently about shapes, colours and size. Children are able to sort, compare and match, and recreate simple patterns.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have opportunities to talk about their families, draw pictures of their homes and look at photographs to talk about events in their lives. They learn about the living and growing world. They explore the wild life area and enjoy digging and planting. Children enjoy using the computers in school and talk about the 'mouse, screen and keyboard'. They are not always able to explore objects or show an interest in why things happen and how things work.

### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement: Very Good

Children show a good awareness of space as they move around both indoors and outside. They show good control and co-ordination, they are able to follow tracks on their bikes, play hopscotch and follow footprints on the playground. They are learning to handle a range of tools in drawing, painting and construction. They use scissors, brushes and glue spreaders with increasing confidence and skill. Children are developing a good awareness of a healthy lifestyle, exercise and good hygiene practices.

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement: Very Good

Children participate in a good range of activities which are planned to promote children's creative development and imagination. Children explore colour, texture and develop their own ideas through varied activities. They draw pictures of their favourite part of a story, act out role play and play hide and seek. Children enjoy painting, playing with sand, water and making models. Children's work is well displayed. Children enjoy experimenting with sound when they use the musical instruments.

**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**

- improve the provision of activities to enable all children to link sounds to letters
- increase the use of resources to develop children's understanding of how things work and why things happen
- increase opportunities for children to self select activities and resources.

*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.*