



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 135309

DfES Number: 525353

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	10/07/2003
Inspector Name	Jennifer Liverpool

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	LANCASTER ROAD PLAYGROUP
Setting Address	49 Lancaster Road Enfield Middlesex EN2 0BS

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The partnership of Margaret Spray & Brianna Staines
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Margaret Spray & Brianna Staines
Address	131 Morley Hill Enfield Middlesex EN2 0BQ

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

Lancaster Road Playgroup opened in 1969. It operates from two rooms with an interconnecting door in a church hall, with an accessible outdoor area covered with safety surface and bordered by flower beds. The premises is in walking distance to transport facilities, schools and shops. The playgroup serves the local area.

The playgroup is registered to provide care for a 30 children aged from two to five years. There are currently 74 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 46 funded three year olds and 11 four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Two children have special needs and the group supports seven children who are learning English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 am until 11.30 am Mondays to Fridays, and 12.45 pm until 15.00 pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Two full time and six part time staff work with the children. Six staff members have early years qualifications. Staff are currently on training programmes. The staffing structure consists of two joint supervisors and six playgroup assistants. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP), and the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA).

How good is the Day Care?

Lancaster Road playgroup provides a satisfactory level of care for children. Staff generally have a good understanding of the National Standards and they interpret them reasonably well. The physical environment is welcoming and space is used to its full potential, to enable children to move and play freely. Staff organise the rooms into specific areas of play to ensure that children give their full attention to their work. Staff are deployed effectively to support children's learning needs and maintain their interests. They promote hygiene well. They are able to mostly identify areas of risk within the group, and there is a satisfactory level of safety.

Staff have good relationships with children, and develop children's social skills through setting their own examples, through talk, and in planned activities, and as a result of this children are able to relate well with their peers. The playgroup offer a range of interesting and valuable activities both in and outdoors, and ensures that all children have opportunities to be actively involved. Staff are aware of individual children's needs and are mostly successful in meeting them. Written assessment of children's achievements and progress are completed by staff, though not always made available to parents unless requested or when children are leaving at the end of term to go to school.

The playgroup has develop generally good working relationships with parents. They have produced written information about their service, and it is shared with parents. Staff make themselves available to exchange verbal information about children's development in general terms. The playgroup uses a range of policies to support the service, and all are made available for parents to see, though some are in need of being reviewed so that they are in line with current legislations.

What has improved since the last inspection?

No actions or recommendations were identified at the last inspection.

What is being done well?

- The playgroup develops good relationships with the children, and enables them to learn good social skills and as a result of this, children relate well with their peers. (standard 3 & 11);
- The playroom is well organised and encompasses different areas of play, which enables children to give their full attention to their work; (2 & 3)
- Staff promote hygiene well, and children understand the importance of washing their hands after toileting, and eating of meals; (3 & 7)
- The playgroup offers a range of valuable activities both indoors and outdoors that appeals to children's interests and build on their knowledge and understanding. (3 & 9)

What needs to be improved?

- the arrangement for identifying possible hazards and action taken to minimise risk, including timescales, and to keep a more detailed fire drill practice report. (standard 6)
- the procedure for lost children when out on trips or those are uncollected from the provision; (standard 2 & 14)
- the policies for health and safety, sickness, equal opportunities and special educational needs; (standard 6, 7, 9 & 10)
- the record keeping of children's progress to include more details, and ensuring that parents are given regular opportunities to see them; (3 & 12)

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 must take the following actions by the date shown**

Std	Action	Date
2	Devise a written procedure for lost or uncollected children	15/10/2003
6	meet any recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer (in this case a Fire Log Book)	15/10/2003
6	conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying action(s) to be taken to minimize identified risks	15/10/2003

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

Std	Recommendation
7	devise and implement a policy about the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious and make sure parents are made aware of it
9	review and update the equal opportunity policy so that it is consistent with current legislation and guidance. Ensure that this is understood and implemented by all staff and shared with parents
10	review and update the written statement on special needs so that it is consistent with current legislation and guidance. Ensure that this is understood and implemented by all staff
12	provide more opportunities for parents to receive regular information on their children's progress

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The quality of teaching is generally good. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. They show interest in a range of first hand experiences provided. They respond well because most activities are suitable for their stage of development and require their involvement.

Staff are deployed effectively to keep children safe, and support them in their work. This is most effective in enabling children to progress in the areas of mathematics, personal, social and emotional development and in most aspects of communication, language and literacy, although staff do not always refer to phonics. Staff ensure that there is a good balance between adult directed activities and child initiated activities, and although there is little evidence of long term curriculum plans, the weekly plan does encompass all of the six areas of learning. Since the previous inspection, staff have taken some steps to link the assessments with planning. Overall, planning and assessment remains a key issue. Staff have expanded on their special educational needs policy, though it is not fully in line with current legislation. There are links already established between the playgroup and outside specialists and are staff are sensitive to the children's needs, working closely with parents.

Leadership and management is generally good. Staff work well as a team. Since the last inspection, staff have worked hard to further develop their knowledge and skills in childcare and education. The monitoring and evaluation of the playgroup is mostly informal.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are kept fully informed about the provision. Staff verbally report children's progress on general terms, but written assessments are not always made available, unless requested or normally when children leave to go to school. Overall, parents are pleased with the care their children receive in the playgroup.

What is being done well?

- A well resourced playgroup, with an attractive outdoor play area.
- Social skills are well promoted during play and practical activities. Children relate well with each other and cooperate during free chosen activities.
- Technology aids are used well to support children's learning in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
- Children show good skills in using the mouse control and operating the computer.
- Staff work well as a team, and they value each other's skills and experiences.

What needs to be improved?

- the written assessment records to ensure that there is full coverage of the early learning goals, that it is effective in tracking children's progress over a period of time, and is regularly shared with parents;
- the short term plans to include more details on staff deployment, grouping methods and ways to meet the needs of children of various abilities;
- the programme for communication, language and literacy to include more challenges for older children, in particular to learn the shape and sound of letters and how these link with their names and words;
- the programme for personal, social and emotional development to place more emphasis on children's independence in self help skills.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Staff have made limited progress in the implementation of their action plan, which was drawn up in response to the key issues identified in the previous OFSTED report. The playgroup was required to improve planning and assessments systems, raise teaching standards and develop a more detailed special educational needs policy. Some, but insufficient progress has been made in addressing these four issues. Staff have taken some steps to link assessments with planning, and as a result of this, they provide a valuable range of activities. However, assessment records and samples of children's work do not clearly show their achievements or progress over a period of time because not all aspects of learning is covered, and samples of children's work are sometimes not dated. The requirements to improve planning and assessments still remain a key issue to develop. Staff have expanded on their special educational needs policy to outline the steps taken in the identification and support of children with special educational needs, although it is not fully in line with current legislation. Staff have worked very hard to develop their knowledge and raise teaching standards through attending training.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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The programme for personal, social and emotional development is generally good. Positive relationships between staff and children are clearly evident. Children relate well with their peers and they cooperate during planned activities as well as in their free chosen play. Children are generally well motivated and they show good concentration skills. They are able to attend to their personal needs, though there is less attention paid to promoting independence during practical routines.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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The programme for communication, language and literacy is generally good. Children interact and talk to each other during small and whole group activities and in their own free chosen play. They demonstrate good listening skills in stories, and a variety of equipment promotes this well. There are good opportunities for children to recognise their names and familiar words, although there is less emphasis placed on helping older children to learn phonics.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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The programme for mathematical development is generally good. Staff provide suitable activities, both planned and spontaneous to help children develop understanding of mathematical concepts. Children recognise numbers and count up to and beyond ten. They use cutters to print, and commercial products to create mathematical patterns. Through simple songs and water activities children are introduced to mathematical language and concepts, although insufficiently challenging for four year olds.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world is very good. Staff provide suitable activities that enable children to observe, experience and learn about similarities and differences in their environment. They explore living creatures in the setting. Children have access to a variety of toys, and show good skills when using them. They are provided with a range of natural and man made materials to handle and explore, and have good opportunities to build and construct.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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The programme for children's physical development is very good. The playroom, outdoor area and play equipment provide ample opportunities for vigorous activities, and the development of agility, co-ordination and balancing skills. Children ride bikes with confidence, and show good ball skills. Suitable activities are planned to foster the development of manipulative skills. Staff ensure that construction sets and cogs and wheels are suitably challenging to both older and younger children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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The programme for creative development is generally good. Available are a worthwhile range of materials for children to explore shape, form, and experiment with sounds. Children experiment with sand and water play, and staff provide playdough which children manipulate to explore shape and texture, although insufficient emphasis is placed on helping children to experience the feel of different materials. Children enjoy acting out their real life experiences in the role-play area.

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

- The key issues to be addressed are as follows:
- Continue to develop assessments and written records ensuring that the early learning goals are comprehensively covered, and that children's progress are clearly shown, for example by including dates on entries and any samples of work kept, and sharing assessments with parents on a regular basis;
- Improve the planning of the overall programme to ensure that the deployment of staff for focus activities are clearly identified, the methods used to target individuals or groups, and noting how any necessary modification or extension are used to meet the needs of the more or less mature children;
- Enhance the programme for communication, language and literacy by providing more opportunities for older children in particular, to learn the shape and sound of letters and how these link with their names and words;
- Strengthen the programme for personal, social and emotional development to increase children's independence in self help skills.

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.