



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 103850

DfES Number: 514705

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 04/10/2004

Inspector Name Ann Revell

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care

Setting Name St Nicholas Playgroup

Setting Address St Nicholas Vestry
St Nicholas Church, High Street, Strood
Rochester
Kent
ME2 4TR

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Diane Chamberlain

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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

St Nicholas Playgroup opened in 1989 and is privately owned. It operates from one room in a church in the centre of Strood, Kent. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 37 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 20 three-year-olds and 7 four-year-olds who are in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special educational needs and makes provision for children with English as an additional language.

The group opens 4 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 to 11.45 & 12.30 to 15.00.

The owner supervises the playgroup and works with a team of 5 staff. The supervisor and 4 of the staff have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a mentor from the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St. Nicholas Playgroup provides high-quality nursery education which enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and use this to plan stimulating activities and routines that encourage children to learn in a fun way. Staff are clear about what they intend children to learn. They give children their full attention and ask questions that encourage them to find things out for themselves. They encourage children to talk about their play and regularly reinforce past learning. The room is organised to make an interesting, learning environment. Resources are varied and presented imaginatively motivating children to want to learn although role-play scenarios are not in use every day. The calm, supportive management of the children ensures they are kind and polite and that they behave well.

Staff observe children and carefully monitor their progress. They use this information to plan learning targets for all the children to ensure individual progression, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

The leadership and management of the playgroup are very good. The owner / supervisor ensures that staff work well together to provide high quality care and education for the children. Expectations for children's achievements are high. Assessment of children's progress is regularly monitored and staff evaluate their practice and share ideas as to how the provision can be improved.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. There are many formal and informal opportunities for parents to share information with staff about children's progress. Parents understand the curriculum and are fully involved in the playgroup's activities and in their children's learning.

What is being done well?

- The daily whole group time is used very effectively to reinforce many aspects of learning. Children read familiar words, count and recognise numbers and learn letter names and sounds. They listen attentively and participate well.
- Staff and parent relationships are mutually supportive. Parents become involved in the children's topic work and receive frequent reports of their children's progress through the stepping stones.
- The computer is in daily use and many children can use it independently. They use programs to support learning in many curriculum areas and are developing good skills.

- The key worker system benefits all the children. Staff observe children's progress and keep comprehensive records of achievement. They use the information to plan learning targets for each child's own level of development.
- Children enjoy good relationships with staff and each other. They are friendly, considerate and polite and are able to work harmoniously together.

What needs to be improved?

- the opportunities for children to use their imagination in role-play scenarios.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection.

The playgroup were required to provide story times at each session and a daily range of books for children to share and enjoy.

The children now enjoy a quiet reading area and a range of quality books each day. They 'read' independently or with their friends and staff are available to share books with them. They understand how books work. Staff read to the children each day and children enjoy joining in their favourite stories.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are confident and secure in the group and this enables them to try all the new experiences and to concentrate well. They are kind, considerate and well behaved. They take turns on the computer and give some dough to a child who joins the group. Children make confident choices from the range of activities and work purposefully for good periods of time. They are developing good personal independence skills and are encouraged to try, for example, 'writing' their name for themselves.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are confident in speaking to the whole group and use a good range of vocabulary to describe their experiences. They listen attentively and are beginning to take turns in conversation. Children are developing very good early reading skills. They read familiar words from charts and are learning the sounds that letters make. They respond with pleasure to familiar stories. Children are confident writers. They 'write' captions for their drawings and learn to write their names correctly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Daily routines and activities are ensuring children make good progress in their number skills. They count to ten and beyond at register time and find the appropriate numeral on the number chart. When a child arrives late, they correctly add on one more. They sing number songs to reinforce what happens when you take one away. Children can identify a range of both flat and solid shapes, such as a circle, a hexagon and a cylinder. They are skilful at creating patterns as they thread the beads.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are curious and enjoy finding things out, for example, about spiders, in their topic work. They are learning the skills they need to build interesting models with re-cyclable materials. They confidently use computer programs to support many aspects of learning. Outings in the locality are ensuring children are finding out about their community. They enjoy the visit of grandparents and have many opportunities to know about their own culture and beliefs and those of other people.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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All the children enjoy the daily range of equipment and activities that are helping to develop good coordination, control and skills. Children move imaginatively to music like trains and cars and demonstrate a good awareness of space. They are aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies and are learning the importance of healthy eating. They have good pencil control and use the computer mouse accurately. They are learning to use the scissors and the dough tools safely and with good skill.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children make observational drawings of spiders and learn to apply paint in different ways. They use small world play resources to act out their own experiences each day but there are less frequent opportunities for them to enjoy the large role-play scenarios. Children sing tunefully as a group and sometimes on their own. They play instruments to accompany their singing and count themselves in and stop on a signal. They maintain a simple rhythm and can distinguish between soft and loud sounds.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following:
- ensure that children have daily opportunities to use their imagination in a variety of role-play scenarios.

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.