



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 226495

DfES Number: 584129

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 08/03/2004
Inspector Name Patricia Bowler

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Thornton Playgroup
Setting Address Community Centre, Main Street
Thornton
Coalville
Leicestershire
LE67 1AG

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Coral Booth

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

Thornton Playgroup opened in 1970 and current leadership was established in 1996. It operates from two rooms within the Community Centre in Thornton serving the local and surrounding village communities.

There are currently 35 children from 2 to 5 years on roll including 4 funded 3-year-olds and 19 funded 4-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions and there are currently no children with special educational needs or who speak English as a second language.

The group opens five days a week during school term-time from 09:15 to 11:45.

There are three full-time and two part-time staff who work with the children. There is one member of staff who has an early years qualification to NVQ level three, two who hold level two qualifications and are working towards level three and a further staff member who is also working towards level three. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Leicestershire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Thornton Playgroup provides satisfactory care for children. Staff have knowledge and awareness of the National Standards and supporting criteria. They interpret these appropriately to provide an environment for children where space is available to enable positive interaction with children in small groups. Equipment and resources are well-maintained and most policies and procedures are implemented and regularly reviewed.

A satisfactory level of awareness of risks to children's health and safety is maintained and effective measures ensure the premises are secure. Positive liaison with parents is established to discuss and record relevant information to establish the individual needs of children. Child protection procedures ensure staff have a good understanding and sound working practice.

Staff work together to plan and present a range of activities to offer choice to children but these are not always presented to reflect their developmental ability. Although staff work well with children in small groups, deployment is not used effectively to maintain progress in development within large groups. Clear written procedures for behaviour management are established and understood by staff, although these are not always implemented in practice to provide children with clear boundaries in respect of their understanding and maturity.

Staff work effectively with parents who are well-informed about the setting and have access to all procedures and policies. There are appropriate arrangements for parents to liaise with staff to discuss the children's progress and care.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection staff are attending training courses to ensure relevant qualification standards are being met and understanding of local Area Child Protection Committee procedures is maintained to ensure the welfare of children. The group agreed to improve the registration system to include times of arrival and departure and this has resulted in clear recording of when children are present. Safety issues, including an established risk assessment, have been addressed to have a positive impact on children's safety. Procedures to provide a record of visitors to the setting and documentation to include a policy for sick children, administration of medication, incident records and obtaining parental consent to seek emergency advice or treatment have a positive effect on the welfare of children.

What is being done well?

- Staff work well with children in small groups.
- Effective procedures are established to ensure the premises are secure and risks to children's health and safety are minimised.
- Liaison and relationships with parents is good. There are open communication links to share information on a daily basis.

What needs to be improved?

- the organisation of the setting to ensure that all children are sufficiently stimulated and staff are deployed effectively to ensure the safety, welfare and development of all children
- planning of activities and children's participation to enable them to develop and progress to their potential and the provision of resources to reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity and disability
- the effectiveness of procedures for behaviour management to create an environment that encourages positive behaviour
- documentation to establish a procedure for lost or uncollected children.

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
11	Ensure 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.	31/03/2004

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

Std	Recommendation
2	Ensure staff are deployed effectively within the premises to ensure the safety, welfare and development of children.
3	Ensure staff talk with children about what they are doing and have high expectations of what they can achieve and ensure staff are deployed to support children's play and learning.
9	Ensure resources actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.
14	Establish a statement of procedure to be followed if a parent fails to collect a child or a child is lost.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Thornton Playgroup provides a welcoming environment where children make progress towards the early learning goals, although there is some limitation in progress for personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Overall, the provision for nursery education is judged to have some significant weaknesses.

The quality of teaching has significant weaknesses. Staff have good relationships with children and praise them for their efforts and achievements which promotes their self-esteem. Some of the activities provided did not have clear learning intentions and resulted in missed opportunities and a lack of challenge. Some activities, including role play resources, were limited in their presentation and content and therefore reduced the children's interest and valuable use of imagination. Children's behaviour was sometimes distracting to others and this was not always managed or addressed by staff. This was not conducive to their own involvement in worthwhile activities and has a negative impact on their learning. Children did not always conform or concentrate within groups for various reasons, including the size of the group, managed by just one staff member and unrealistic expectations of younger children.

The leadership and management of the playgroup is generally good. There is a commitment to improve the quality of the curriculum and children's development. The manager has an appraisal system for staff development.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Staff are approachable, provide a welcoming environment and have developed good relationships with parents. Parents receive good communications from the playgroup, including written and verbal information.

What is being done well?

- Staff commitment to further training, including the undertaking of level two and three childcare qualifications and other relevant courses relating to the foundation stage.
- Partnership with parents, including the positive relationships staff have with parents and the opportunities to share information.

What needs to be improved?

- curriculum planning so that the learning intentions for activities are clear and linked to the stepping stones, which will provide more regular and effective opportunities for children's development in all six areas of learning.

- children's assessment records so that they identify what each child could usefully do next to ensure that they are challenged at an appropriate level to their developmental needs and the link for this with the curriculum planning.
- the deployment and organisation of staff to provide additional support to group activities and more use of smaller, age and ability related groups in order to ensure that these activities are more effective learning experiences for the children.
- children's communication, language and literacy development by planning and providing regular opportunities within their play to ascribe meaning to marks, to practise meaningful writing and to develop their awareness and understanding that print has meaning.
- children's personal, social and emotional development by providing more opportunities for them to increase their levels of independence and for them to develop their behaviour and self- control.
- staff support for children's behaviour by ensuring consistent intervention so that the children understand adult expectations and are clearly aware of any boundaries.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The playgroup has made generally good progress since the last inspection. Parents now receive information about the six areas of learning and have opportunities to meet with their keyworker and look at their child's developmental assessment profiles and discuss and contribute to this. Staff have shown good commitment to the undertaking of many various training opportunities, including level two and level three childcare qualifications and foundation stage curriculum planning and areas of learning. There are improved opportunities for children to use and explore technology and the setting has extended their role play resources, although the resources were limited in their presentation and content. This reduced the children's interest and valuable use of imagination.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children show interest in activities and concentrate with adult-led activities. They meet with people from their community and have opportunities to explore their local environment. Although, children are usually co-operative, they do not always seem clear of adult expectations and behavioural boundaries. This is sometimes distracting to others and not conducive to their involvement in worthwhile activities. Children do not have sufficient opportunities to progress their levels of independence.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children generally communicate well with each other and adults within the setting. More able children are able to form recognisable letters to write their name. However, they have little opportunity to practise meaningful writing within their play and have limited opportunity to begin to recognise familiar words or see that print has meaning. Children do use books for enjoyment, although were not always able to concentrate on adult read stories due to the organisation and size of the groups.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Some children can count from one to nine and above. They can establish the quantity of objects and relate this to the recognised number. Children can recognise some shapes and compare size. There are opportunities to develop concepts of volume and measure. Children are developing mathematical language for describing size, more or less.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have some informal opportunities to talk to staff about their home life experiences, events and feelings. They are developing good skills with construction activities and using their imagination to build. Children use programmable toys and technical equipment to support their learning. Activities linked to diversity, cultural and religious events are helping children to develop a positive awareness of other people.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have the opportunity to use a variety of equipment and resources for their physical development. They can negotiate each other and are developing spatial awareness. Children are able to use and manipulate a variety of tools and materials effectively. Children are developing some awareness of changes to their body when active. Opportunities to develop climbing skills on larger equipment is to be programmed more regularly into the children's curriculum.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are developing their senses through activities which encourage feeling and exploration of textures, tasting of foods and experimenting with sounds. They engage in role play activities to express their imagination, although some opportunities are limited in their presentation and content and therefore limit the children's interest. Children can recall familiar songs and rhymes and associated actions. They are able to use their imagination through a variety of activities.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Key issues:
- Improve planning so that the learning intentions for activities are clear and linked to the stepping stones, which provide more regular, effective opportunities for children's development in all six areas of learning. Use assessment to plan what each child could usefully do next to ensure that children are challenged at an appropriate level to their developmental needs and link this with the curriculum planning.
- Ensure that staff deployment is organised to provide support to group activities. Make use of smaller, age and ability related groups in order to ensure that these activities are more effective learning experiences for the children.
- Improve children's communication, language and literacy development by planning and providing regular opportunities within their play to ascribe meaning to marks, to practise meaningful writing and to develop their awareness and understanding that print has meaning.
- Improve children's personal, social and emotional development by providing more opportunities for them to increase their levels of independence and for them to develop their behaviour and self-control. Support children's behaviour by consistent intervention by staff so that children are made clearly aware of any boundaries and of adult expectations and that they begin to consider the consequences of their actions.

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.