



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 119537

DfES Number: 516295

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	26/01/2004
Inspector Name	Ann Hilary Guy

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Whitehouse Playgroup
Setting Address	Benvenue Avenue Eastwood Southend on Sea Essex SS9 5SJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Whitehouse Playgroup
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Whitehouse Playgroup
Address	Benvenue Avenue Eastwood Southend on Sea Essex SS9 5SJ

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

Whitehouse Playgroup opened in 1973. It operates from one room in a demountable building adjacent to Heycroft Primary School, in the residential area of Eastwood. The playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently 37 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 23 nursery education funded three-year-olds and 6 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently support some children with special needs and none with English as an additional language, although provision is in place to do so.

The playgroup opens five mornings a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 11:50.

Six members of staff work with the children. One has an early years qualification to level three and another is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification to level three. The playgroup receives support from a teacher and mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Whitehouse Playgroup provide a satisfactory standard of care for children. It is a small, secure and caring playgroup with a committed staff group. They have not yet managed to meet the minimum level of staff qualifications required by the National Standards, although strategies are in place to do so. Some of the staff have many years experience of working with young children. The playgroup policies are understood and implemented by the staff, and underpin the practice of the group, although some amendments are required in order for them to meet the National Standards.

The premises are secure and suitable measures are in place to protect the children both inside and outside the building, however some areas for improvement have been identified. Children are encouraged to follow sound health and hygiene

routines throughout the session.

The staff work well as a team and provide a suitable range of activities for the children, although these lack challenge and stimulation for the older, more able child. The staff have a good relationship with the children and diffuse any instances of challenging behaviour in a suitable manner.

The playgroup values the support of the parents and carers. Daily informal discussions with the staff, together with informative notice boards both inside and outside the building, all help to keep them well informed about the activities in the playgroup and about their child's progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The complaints policy, parental agreement and consent forms have been updated satisfactorily. Staff have been working on their action plan to meet the qualifications requirement of the National Standards but have been thwarted by the cancellation of suitable training courses, although the play leader has almost completed her level three qualification.

What is being done well?

- Staff ensure the children are safe and well cared for both inside and outside the building.
- Established routines are in place to promote good health and hygiene and staff actively encourage children to follow these.
- The staff have a good relationship with the parents and carers and encourage involvement with the playgroup.

What needs to be improved?

- checking procedures for staff and committee clearances
- the registration system, to reflect accurately the number of children, staff and visitors at any one time
- the safety of plants in the garden
- the fire practice procedure
- the policy for child protection.

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
1	ensure that there are effective procedures in place for checking that all staff and committee have suitable clearances
2	ensure the register accurately reflects the number of children staff and visitors present at any one time
6	make sure that poisonous plants are inaccessible to the children, for example ivy
6	review the fire procedure, especially looking at the timing of the register, ensuring the safety of the children at all times
13	review the policy to ensure that the child protection procedure for the playgroup complies with local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures and supporting documentation

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 Whitehouse Playgroup is unacceptable and children are making poor progress towards the early learning goals. They make acceptable progress in personal, social and emotional development but other areas of learning are poor.

The quality of teaching is poor. The staff have an insecure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and do not understand how to plan an educational programme to support the children's progress in learning. The staff provide a suitable range of play opportunities. They listen and talk to the children, giving some instructions and explanations, but there is insufficient questioning and stimulation. Daily plans do not give clear guidance to staff. For example, milk circle was organised to take place on a pretend train journey, but the scenario was not developed into an integrated learning experience and staff missed opportunities to draw the potential learning from the play. Whole group sessions do not sustain children's interest. Assessment of children's learning is based upon observations, but does not take account of the stepping stones and does not usefully inform planning. Staff do not adapt activities to provide sufficient challenge for more able children or to meet the needs of less able children. Staff do not effectively challenge deteriorating behaviour.

Leadership and management are poor. The group lacks a sense of direction and has encountered many difficulties in accessing suitable training. The playleader has yet to fully develop her role in evaluating, monitoring and reviewing practice.

The partnership with parents and carers has significant weaknesses. Parents are encouraged to bring their child into the setting but staff report little parental interest. Limited space restricts the accessibility of the noticeboard and information on the educational provision is basic.

What is being done well?

- Children are confident, sociable and have caring relationships with each other and staff.
- Children learn to count and develop their pencil control in preparation for writing.
- A good range of small world toys are provided for children to play with which encourage their imaginative skills.

What needs to be improved?

- staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and the Early Learning Goals

- the planning at all levels, especially short term and for creative development
- the use of assessments to help staff to decide what to learn next
- monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There has been poor progress made since the last inspection.

Four key issues relating to weaknesses in planning, teaching and assessment and the programme for creative development were identified at the previous inspection.

Staff training was identified as the means of improving these areas, but the playgroup team report continued difficulties in accessing suitable courses. The playleader has almost completed her training but has not yet been able to implement improvements. The staff cite confusion with complicated layers of planning and assessment, difficulties in funding training and volume of work as additional problems to be overcome.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Effective use is made of everyday situations to encourage the children to form good relationships with and sensitivity towards others. They confidently express their needs and develop personal independence. However, children are not always interested and excited to learn and some group activities do not sustain children's interest. Children's behaviour is deteriorating. Snacktime is yet to become an integrated learning experience.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Poor
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Activities such as the tracing of names support the development of formal writing skills, but children do not make marks in practical situations e.g. making of train tickets became an activity for the adult rather than a learning opportunity for the child. Opportunities to link sounds with letters are limited. Staff interaction does not effectively support the development of speaking and listening skills. Poor emphasis is given to stories, although staff read to individual children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Poor
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Many children count but have insufficient opportunities to use their counting skills in practical contexts. Children learn about size and shape through formally planned topics such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears. The playgroup has suitable resources for developing the children's comparing, sorting and matching skills but staff are uncertain how to use these effectively. Calculation is largely omitted from the programme.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Poor
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There are some opportunities for children to use technological equipment with interactive reading books, but plans do not support the development of skills in a meaningful way. Activities lack interest and restrict the development of children's desire to observe, investigate and explore the world around them. Learning about other cultures is restricted.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Poor
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Children move around the playroom with adequate control and co-ordination, but space limits the provision of activities which support the development of large muscle control. Children have regular opportunities to play freely outdoors, but planned use of a range of small and large equipment tends to be limited to the summer months. Children use a limited range of tools and health awareness is given little awareness.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Poor
Children have access to an art and craft table where they can experience an adequate range of media, but this area lacks stimulation and is not well used. Music based activities are given insufficient emphasis by staff. Children have too few opportunities to respond using their senses and to use their imagination in art and design, dance, role play and stories. Staff do not intervene appropriately to support role play.	

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is not fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is unacceptable. Children are making poor progress towards the early learning goals.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Improve staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals.
- Further develop plans to ensure that they underpin progression in children's learning. Include sufficient detail on the short term plans to show what children are intended to learn and to guide staff in their delivery of the educational programme.
- Develop assessment records to enable staff to track children's progress against the stepping stones and the early learning goals. Use these to show what children need to learn next.
- Devise systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the provision.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 20 working days showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. A copy of the action plan must be sent to the local education authority. The Department for Education and Skills will write to the provider asking for a copy of the action plan. The Secretary for Education and Skills will then decide whether to withdraw the provider's entitlement to receive funding for 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.