



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 510068

DfES Number: 596865

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 07/12/2004
Inspector Name Miriam Sheila Brown

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Holy Apostles Playgroup
Setting Address Holy Apostles C of E School
Battledown Approach
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 6QZ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Holy Apostles Pavillion Groups 1088800

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Holy Apostles Pavillion Groups
Address Holy Apostles C of E School
Battledown Approach
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 6QZ

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

Holy Apostles Playgroup operates from the Pavilion sited at the rear of Holy Apostles Primary School on Battledown Approach, Cheltenham. The premises are also used by the after-school club, during school terms. The Pavilion stands close to the school playing field and is used by the group for outdoor play.

The playgroup is run by a management committee with representatives from the Holy Apostles School, local Holy Apostles Church and elected parents. The playgroup serves the local communities of Battledown, Whaddon and Charlton Kings and has close links with both the school and the church.

The playgroup is open from 08.50 to 12.00 Monday to Friday and from 12.30 to 15.00 Monday, Tuesday and Friday, during school terms. It is registered to care for 24 children aged from 2 to 5 years, and accepts children from 2 years and 9 months. There are currently 32 children on role, of these 10 are funded 3-year-olds and 6 funded 4-year-olds.

Six members of staff work with the children over five days. All staff either hold or are working towards childcare qualifications and the play leader holds an Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education. Staff have also completed first aid and child protection training. The playgroup is a member of Gloucestershire Parent and Toddler Association and also receives support from the area special educational needs advisor.

How good is the Day Care?

Holy Apostles Playgroup provides good care for children. It is bright, clean and welcoming and offers well planned provision for them. There is a good range and balance of toys and resources provided each day, which meet children's needs effectively. Staff work very well as a team and benefit from a close working relationship with Holy Apostles School.

Safety issues are very well addressed and staff are vigilant in supervising children at

all times. Basic hygiene routines are good. Accident records are well kept, however the sickness policy does not give clear information about exclusion times for illness and emergency medical treatment permission has not been sought from parents. Children have free access to drinks throughout the sessions and enjoy their snack times. Staff have all received child protection training and demonstrated through discussion, a good awareness of group procedures, although there is scope to develop the written policy.

Staff organise a wide range of activities to support children in most areas of their development. Topic work is planned with a common theme for all ages and adapted appropriately. The sessions are well planned to provide children with good opportunities to explore and experiment through a range of structured and free-play activities, although the methods used to assist children's free choice are sometimes limited. The playgroup resources support all aspects of equal opportunity and there are effective procedures in place to support children with special needs. Children's behaviour is very good and staff provide positive and consistent support to all children.

Parents are offered good information about the playgroup. A noticeboard outlines daily activities and work themes and parents are encouraged to take an active part in group sessions. There is scope to improve parental access to policy documents and to include a contact for the regulatory body, within these.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last day care inspection in 2002 the group agreed to comply with safety measures recommended by the Fire Safety Officer. The group have followed guidelines and attached the fire blanket to the wall in the kitchen area. This ensures that it is easily and readily accessible in an emergency situation and effectively assists in maintaining children's safety.

What is being done well?

- Team work within the group is excellent. Staff are well qualified, clear about their roles and responsibilities and take an active part in the organisation of each session. The group is well supported by the Primary School.
- All aspects of children's safety are well addressed. Staff are vigilant in following the Health and Safety policy and complete regular risk assessments of all areas.
- Children with special educational needs are well supported within the group. All relevant documentation is in place and is shared with parents and other health professionals. The policy documents provide parents with clear information and demonstrate a good understanding of the Code of Practice for the Assessment of Special Educational Needs.
- Children's behaviour is very good and staff employ positive strategies to encourage children to be thoughtful of each other and to assist them in regulating their own behaviour.

What needs to be improved?

- the detail provided within the complaints, sickness and child protection policies
- seeking of permissions from parents regarding emergency medical treatment
- methods to increase children's choice of activities.

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
7	Request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.
14	Develop the complaints, sickness and child protection policies to ensure they provide sufficient, clear and accessible information for parents and staff.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Holy Apostles Playgroup provides good quality nursery education and children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Children's personal, social and emotional development, mathematical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world is very good. Other areas are generally good with many strong points in each.

Teaching is generally good and staff have a good knowledge of the early learning goals and how these are used to assist in children's learning. Staff support the children appropriately and provide a range of good opportunities to help them develop in most areas of learning. However, plans do not always link clearly to the stepping stones and some opportunities to develop children's early writing skills and large muscle control are missed. Staff use good behaviour management strategies which encourage children to regulate their own behaviour and to be thoughtful of others. Support for children with special needs is effective and individual needs well addressed. Observations are completed regularly and used to assist in planning to meet children's needs, however, individual assessments are not used to provide an ongoing record of progress.

The leadership and management of the group is generally good. There is an effective staff team who work well together and who are committed to ongoing improvement. However, minor weaknesses in the provision are not always acknowledged. The group is very well supported by the school and key issues from the last inspection have been met.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are provided with good information about the setting through the notice board and informal discussion. Some opportunities to keep parents informed about their children's progress during the year are missed and information about the stepping stones is limited. All parents are invited to share their time and skills with the group and are offered a warm welcome by staff.

What is being done well?

- The programme for personal, social and emotional development is very good. The sessions are well organised to encourage children's developing self-esteem, confidence and sense of belonging. This is assisted by staff who have clear expectations of children's behaviour and provide them with positive strategies to manage their own behaviour and to have regard for each others needs.
- Children's mathematical development is well supported through planned activities, group routines and incidental opportunities, for example, carpet games when children take turns to show different numbers of fingers, saying how many and then checking by touching and counting.

- Children have many good opportunities to explore and investigate, extend their designing skills and learn about time, through well planned activities and staff interactions, for example, discussing holiday destinations and space travel.
- Children's awareness of letters and sounds is very well supported through group circle games when children very much enjoy using nonsense words to rhyme with real words, for example, purple, 'wurple' and sophie, 'dophie'.

What needs to be improved?

- children's opportunities to use mark-making in their free play
- the opportunities for children to continue to develop their large muscle control during the winter months
- the use of the stepping stones to guide planning and more regular individual assessment
- parents understanding of the stepping stones and how these are used to assist in children's development.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The group have made very good progress in the two key issues that they agreed to address at their last education inspection.

The first was to develop the book area and the labelling of displays and resources, to offer children an enhanced print-rich environment. The second, to reorganise snack times to reduce the waiting period, particularly for younger children.

Staff have purchased large floor cushions and reorganised the book corner to provide a more welcoming area and also have a quiet room where children may sit with staff to read books and enjoy group story times. The room is decorated with bright posters and displays at children's eye level and displays and resources are clearly and attractively labelled.

Following the last inspection, staff have reviewed their procedures immediately before snack time which has effectively raised their awareness of potential delays for children. All are now seated quickly following bathroom routines and enjoy their snack time.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy and settle quickly to self-chosen activities. They engage unfamiliar adults in their play, with confidence. Children show care and concern for each other and demonstrate positive relationships with staff, seeking their support when needed. They are well behaved, follow instructions well and are learning to regulate their own behaviour. Children persist at set tasks for extended periods of time and show a good awareness of themselves as group members and a wider community.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show confidence when speaking in group situations and respond positively to staff at circle times. They enjoy playing sound and letter games using a variety of rhyming words. Children use books well and are starting to recognise some familiar words. Opportunities to develop mark-making and writing skills are limited, although older children are writing their names with some letters correctly formed. Children have good opportunities each day, to develop their hand and eye coordination.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have a very good awareness of number. When counting they touch and say the number and most recognise numerals to seven. Children enjoy group games which reinforce their confidence using numbers. They practise using positional language in their play and add and subtract in adult-led activities. Children match and sort using different criteria and learn about balance playing with scales in the sand tray. They measure using their own bodies, for example, is the tower taller than me?

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore and investigate through planned topic work and a variety of free-play activities. They design and model in two and three dimensions using a variety of resources. Children have a growing awareness of everyday technology and are competent using the computer. Their awareness of time is well supported by group routines. Children enjoy finding out about their immediate environment through local walks and visitors to the group. They learn about different cultures throughout the year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children move confidently around the setting and are careful when in restricted spaces. They have many good opportunities to use small equipment and tools each day, for example, scissors, brushes and sand equipment. However, large physical play is restricted during the winter months when climbing and similar activities are not available. Planned work such as topics 'about me' and group routines support and develop their knowledge of keeping healthy.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children participate in a wide variety of art and craft work. They explore different textures, painting techniques and modelling media. They have a large repertoire of songs and enjoy singing and dancing games such as 'The farmers in his den'. Children have many opportunities for role-play and use resources appropriately to enhance their imaginations, for example, having a pretend picnic. Children are enabled to express their emotions, thoughts and feelings throughout their play.

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

- increase children's opportunities to make marks in their free-play using a variety of resources.
- develop the use of the stepping stones to guide and inform planning and assessment, which may then be used to assist in developing parents understanding of the Foundation Stage and provide ongoing feedback about children's progress.

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.