



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 218081

DfES Number:

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	28/02/2005
Inspector Name	Elaine Poulton

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care, Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Albert Bear Playgroup
Setting Address	Chesterton Community Centre London Road, Chesterton Newcastle Staffordshire ST5 7EA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Ms Judith Ellis
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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

Albert Bear Playgroup opened in 1994. It operates from the whole of the first floor of the Chesterton Community Centre, Newcastle-under-Lyme. The group serves the local and wider area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the group at any one time. Albert Bear is open each weekday from 09:00 to 15:00.

There are currently 63 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 27 receive funding for nursery education. The group has systems in place to support children with special needs and also children with English as an additional language.

Albert Bear Playgroup employs six staff. Four staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Albert Bear Playgroup offers good quality provision overall which helps children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Most staff have a suitable knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan a wide range of practical and routine activities to support children's learning. Planning is linked to the early learning goals, but information on differentiation and grouping of children is limited. Relationships between children and staff are good and children are confident to seek help and support. Staff include all children in activities and engage in play and conversations well, however not all children are questioned on their learning or understanding. There is an appropriate system in place to support children with special educational needs, although staff's knowledge of the revised Code of Practice is not fully developed. Staff praise children consistently and manage behaviour well. A very good range and variety of resources are all very easily accessible to support children's free-choice and independence, however more able children are not sufficiently challenged to develop or extend their own ideas during some adult led activities. The current assessment system is not fully effective in informing planning of children's progress along the stepping-stones.

The leadership and management of the group are generally good. Direction is given to staff to ensure they know broadly what they have to do to support children's learning. Monitoring of the quality of teaching is not fully effective, however staff are fully committed to improving nursery funded education and welcome support from the LEA.

Partnership with parents is very good. Sufficient details linked to the six areas of learning are shared with parents. They are kept informed about group activities and events and are welcomed into the setting. Parents receive early years assessment profiles and children's completed work.

What is being done well?

- Staff provide a very good range of resources and activities for the children to support their learning. They are relaxed with the children whilst providing a lively and interesting environment where children explore and investigate freely. Children quickly settle into the session and become actively involved in a very broad and stimulating range of games, toys and activities.
- Staff provide very good opportunities for children to initiate and manage their own tasks. Children are gaining their independence skills well through the thoughtful way snack-time is organised to give children responsibility and help them feel included and valued.
- Resources, games, toys and activities are all within easy reach and children

self-select resources enabling them to have choices and work independently or in small groups.

- Staff build trusting relationships with children and offer consistent praise for good behaviour and achievement which in turn promotes children's learning.
- Staff provide very good opportunities for active involvement in physical play and staff work hard to ensure children's learning is questioned appropriately.
- There are good relationships with parents and they are encouraged to be part of the life of the group.

What needs to be improved?

- staff's awareness of the Foundation Stage, stepping stones and early learning goals and how children learn
- planning and assessment processes and the monitoring and evaluation system
- challenges through group activities and routines to extend children's learning
- staffs knowledge of the revised Code of Practice
- opportunities for children to see, hear, say and use letters and words to link initial sounds to letters and familiar words, such as their name
- activities and routines to offer basic addition and subtraction
- tools, techniques and resources presented to enable children to assemble and join materials
- opportunities for children to discuss and understand the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active
- activities that reflect children's own imaginative ideas, thoughts and feelings.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are interested and eager to join in. They show good levels of concentration and can follow instructions well. Children are confident to try out new activities but show less interest in some adult-led routine activities. They build good relationships with staff and talk about their own and others needs and differences. Children cooperate well and are beginning to share and take turns. They select resources independently and can initiate and manage their own routine tasks very well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children share experiences with adults and talk about their family and interests. They listen and enjoy stories, songs and rhymes. They learn to handle books well and turn the pages over with care. Children see words in the setting, on posters, displays, friezes and in books. There are few challenges for children to recognise letters, link initial sounds to letters or to see their name in print. Children give meaning to marks they make and attempt writing for a variety of purposes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children can count up to ten within a group situation. They have good opportunities to use and recognise numbers when completing puzzles, games and singing number rhymes, but not all children are relating counting to adding numbers together or taking numbers away. Children can say and name basic shapes and are learning to fold a piece of card to make two equal halves. Children are helped to develop their problem solving skills through matching and comparing games.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are learning about the world in which they live and the different people. They find out about butterflies and then release them outside. They learn about people who help us, through discussions and activities. Not all children are learning to join or assemble a wide range of materials. Children talk about the place they live, the weather and what type of clothes to wear. They find out about programmable toys but are not always questioned on their learning or understanding.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children move confidently around the furniture and equipment and are able to stop and start safely. They practise balancing, crawling, jumping, sliding and stepping over equipment set out as an obstacle course, with excitement and enthusiasm. Not all children learn about the changes that happen to their body when active. Planning shows children take part in discussions that help them understand about good hygiene and healthy foods. They are beginning to use tools with increasing control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
<p>Children explore and investigate a wide range of free-choice activities such as imaginative role-play, sand, dough, gloop and water play. Children confidently name a wide range of colours. They talk excitedly about caring for and feeding the baby-dolls, freely expressing their ideas and thoughts. Not all children are challenged to use or develop their own ideas imaginatively during some adult led activities. Children taste, touch and smell different foods and fruits, showing their preferences.</p>	

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

- continue to increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn and introduce an effective system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching methods and techniques
- clearly link planning and assessment to the stepping-stones, provide for missing aspects of learning to ensure children receive a complete, well-balanced early years curriculum
- offer appropriate challenges to support and question children's understanding and learning and utilize resources, group activities and routines to extend more able children's learning
- further develop staff knowledge of the revised Code of Practice for Children with Special Educational Needs in their identified role as the Special Educational Needs Coordinator for Albert Bear Pre-school Playgroup.

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.