



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127575

DfES Number: 582829

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 08/07/2004
Inspector Name Fran Fielder

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St Andrews Playgroup
Setting Address Watling Street
Dartford
Kent
DA1 1RF

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name St Andrews Playgroup 1026639

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Andrews Playgroup
Address St. Andrews United Reformed Church
Watling Street
Dartford
Kent
DA1 1RF

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 Andrews Playgroup has been running for almost 25 years. It operates from the Church Hall in a residential area on the outskirts of Dartford. The playgroup has use of a hall and one other room. There are kitchen and toilet facilities and an outdoor area. The group serves families from the local community.

There are currently 84 children, aged from 2 to 4 years, on roll. This includes 43 funded 3 year olds and 30 funded 4 years olds. The setting supports a number of children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup five opens days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9.30 until 12.00 every day and from 12.15 until 14.45 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Nine members of staff work with the children and six have a recognised early years qualification. Two members of staff hold a current first aid certificate. The setting receives support from an advisor from the 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?

The provision for nursery education at St Andrews Playgroup is acceptable and of good quality. Overall, children are making generally good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. There are significant weaknesses in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. All other areas of learning are generally good.

Teaching is generally good. Staff have different levels of understanding of the foundation stage. The newest member of staff has an excellent knowledge and works hard to promote children's learning by stimulating thought and encouraging imagination. Staff provide a range of practical activities and are enthusiastic when presenting these. Staff meet regularly to discuss planning and any concerns they have about the children. They make regular observations and assess children's progress but do not use this information to ensure appropriate challenge for all children.

Some staff ask questions that encourage thinking. Staff's approach to behaviour management is inconsistent when dealing with challenging behaviour. Staff build good, trusting relationships with the children. Staff encourage social skills such as sharing.

The leadership and management are generally good. The new chair has a good understanding of her role. Appraisals identify training needs and staff attend relevant course to ensure they can meet the care and learning needs of the children. There is no formal system for identifying strengths and weaknesses within the provision.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Staff are friendly and approachable. Parents receive information about the foundation stage but are kept informed of the topics covered. Parents can make appointments to speak with staff and have the opportunity to contribute to the assessment process.

What is being done well?

- Children are happy, confident and keen to try new things. They develop trusting relationships and relate well to adults and each other. They learn to share and understand the need to take turns.
- Some staff support children in their role-play and guide them through new imagined experiences.
- Children enjoy stories and many respond positively to staff who use props when telling well-known tales. Staff's enjoyment of stories encourages children's love of books.
- All are committed to improving the care and education. Staff attend relevant courses to ensure they have sufficient skills to support children's learning.

What needs to be improved?

- the programme for knowledge and understanding of the world
- the programme for creative development
- the planning to ensure all children are challenged
- the monitoring of the educational provision.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Progress since the last inspection is generally good. Some efforts have been made to improve the provision for knowledge and understanding of the world. Children have some opportunities to look at how things work and to explore the world around them. The provision for this area of learning still has significant weaknesses and a key issue is raised to improve this.

Staff have sound knowledge of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Staff assess children's needs and devise individual educational plans. Parents receive regular feedback on their children's progress.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident, independent and have good self-esteem. Children are happy and some are beginning to make firm friendships. They are beginning to understand and accept differences. Behaviour is sometimes poor and can cause disruption. Some younger children are unable to sit still but some older children concentrate well at self chosen tasks. Children are taught to share and take turns.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children speak confidently to friends and adults. Some speak well in large groups. Children handle books well and some listen intently to stories. Children are particularly enthusiastic when adults use props to tell well-known fairy tales. Children recognise their names on labels and some are keen to write their name. There are plenty of opportunities for children to practice writing. Children particularly enjoy role-play when adults join in.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children count confidently and are keen to join in number rhymes. Some children recognise numbers to 10 and order numbers up to 5. Children are developing a good understanding of measure through activities such as sand and water play. They learn and use mathematical language in everyday situations. There is insufficient challenge for more able children especially in the development of early calculation skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children excitedly share past experiences and talk about significant events in their own lives. Planned activities help children learn about different cultures and customs. There are computerised toys but these are not always readily available. Children have some opportunities to explore using their senses. They handle small tools and understand their purpose. There are limited opportunities for children to develop their design and modelling skills.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move confidently and safely when playing during physical play. They have access to large equipment where they learn to climb and balance. They manoeuvre wheeled toys well. Children learn the importance of keeping healthy through planned activities and follow good hygiene practice. Their fine motor skills are developing well and they select and use small tools competently. They show little awareness of personal space during circle and story time.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:

Significant Weaknesses

Children enjoy role-play and have the opportunity to act out various scenarios while receiving good support from some staff. Children explore texture when creating interesting collages. Children have little opportunity to play with musical instruments or explore sound. Children do not always have access to a range of media such as paints and pastels and this inhibits children's ability to express themselves through their paintings and drawings.

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

- extend the programme for knowledge and understanding of the world to include all aspects
- create more opportunities for children to express themselves freely and imaginatively in their art work and during music sessions
- extend the planning to include differentiation to ensure all children are well challenged and their learning needs met
- introduce a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the educational provision.

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.