



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 221918

DfES Number: 540803

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	29/11/2004
Inspector Name	Pamela Abram

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Brambles Playgroup
Setting Address	St Helen's County Primary School, Colne Road Bluntisham Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE28 3NY

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Brambles Playgroup 1083131
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Brambles Playgroup
Address	St Helen's County Primary School Colne Road, Bluntisham Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE28 3NY

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

Brambles Playgroup, which is managed by a voluntary committee, is located within a village school near St Ives, Cambridgeshire.

There is an enclosed outdoor play area and children have supervised access the school playing field sometimes. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11:30 and from 12:30 to 15:00 during term-times.

There are 49 children from 2 to under 5 years old on roll. Of these 43 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local catchment area and surrounding villages.

The setting employs 8 members of staff. Three of the staff have appropriate early years qualifications.

How good is the Day Care?

Brambles Playgroup provides a satisfactory quality care for children.

Staff create a bright, comfortable setting to help children feel welcome and settled. Measures taken by staff and committee ensure that most risks to children are minimised. Some staff have knowledge of first aid and there are good systems to monitor access to the premises to keep children secure. Documentation mostly supports the management of the group and records help staff to meet children's individual needs, with minor aspects needing review to ensure consistency. Children are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits at refreshment time and individual dietary needs can be met within the setting.

Children have access to a varied programme of activities and equipment to enhance their developmental progress. They are encouraged to become independent in aspects of personal care and sometimes make choices and select items for their own use. Children behave well, responding positively to the clear boundaries set by

staff. This helps them to know what is expected of them and fosters a sense of well-being and self-esteem. The daily routine includes access to outdoor play and fresh air, though the courtyard area is too crowded for use by the whole group. Diversity is acknowledged and there are opportunities for children to gain awareness of other cultures and lifestyles, with some appropriate resources to reflect this ethos. As yet 50% of staff do not hold relevant qualifications in childcare.

Positive partnerships fostered between staff and parents enhance children's sense of belonging and offer them security. There are measures in place to inform parents about the care being offered. Parents express their satisfaction with the setting and some become actively involved in helping at sessions. Liaison with the local primary school enables children to feel confident about their transition into school and they enjoy meeting the older children at playtime.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the setting agreed to review some aspects of documentation to include the procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost or uncollected, the written consents confirming that emergency medication or treatment may be administered and to make parents aware of the policy on exclusion due to illness.

There are now procedures in place to assist staff in dealing with a variety of situations and to ensure that they meet children's needs appropriately, whilst acting in accordance with parents wishes in the event of children having an accident or becoming ill.

They also agreed to conduct a risk assessment of the premises and minimise any identified hazards to enhance safety in the kitchen and in the outdoor play area.

Some measures have been taken to improve safety in the kitchen by relocating the kettle and the microwave is now used on top of the fridge which is a more stable location than its previous site on the draining board. However, the position of the fridge partially blocks the only route in and out of the kitchen. The surface of the enclosed outdoor play area has been improved so that children can use it without risk of tripping on an uneven surface.

The final point for action related to the child protection procedure and parental knowledge of it. Some measures have been taken to make parents more aware of the policy and to include a statement about the procedures to be followed in the event of any allegations being made against staff. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the way documentation is shared with parents and staff are not confident in their ability to implement the procedures.

What is being done well?

- Staff prepare the spacious setting so that it offers a warm and welcoming environment for children, with eye-catching posters and displays to support their themes and topics. They offer a varied range of activities and resources

to promote children's enjoyment and development.

- Access to the building is monitored to ensure children are secure. This also reassures parents that their child cannot leave the building unless supervised by an appropriate adult.
- Children are provided with an appropriate range of toys and resources to promote their learning and the equipment is safely maintained so that it does not impair children's enjoyment or pose a risk to their safety.
- Parents are made welcome and those who help at sessions are given clear guidance to help them know what to do so that they enjoy the experience. Newsletters, notices, and verbal feedback from staff enable parents to have information about the running of the group.
- Children get to know the routines, which gives them a sense of security and they benefit from the close liaison established with the feeder primary school, enabling them to feel confident about the transition to school.

What needs to be improved?

- staff qualifications
- some aspects of documentation
- further opportunities for children to be independent
- minor aspects of safety
- organisation of routines and use of space
- the written child protection policy and staff's knowledge and understanding of it
- opportunities for children to take responsibility

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

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
2	develop and implement an action plan detailing how at least half of all childcare staff will hold a level 2 qualification in childcare
6	conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying action to be taken to minimize identified risks posed by unguarded heaters and partially blocked kitchen doorway
14	Review documentation and record keeping, particularly in relation to the policies for outings and lost child, for existing injuries and medication records and to ensure that information for parents is consistent and that they accurately reflect the National Standards and supporting guidance.
3	Review the organisation of routines and use of space, including the outdoor environment to ensure children's individual needs are met, taking into account their differing stages of development, to create more opportunities for children to make choices, to take responsibility, to select resources for their own use more often.
13	Outline how all staff will increase their knowledge and awareness of child protection and be able to implement the policies and procedures they must follow if they suspect a child is at risk, ensure that the child protection procedures are shared with parents before their child's admission to the group and consider how allegations against staff would be dealt with.

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 Brambles Playgroup is of good quality. It enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals, with some weaknesses in mathematics and physical development.

Teaching is generally good. Staff develop positive relationships with children and encourage them to share, take turns, cooperate with each other. They incorporate knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan the curriculum and use some effective teaching methods to help children get the most from the activities. However, planning does not currently create a balance across all of the areas of learning. Staff record observations of children's achievements. These assessments are not used effectively to inform the next steps for individual children's learning.

Leadership and management is generally good, with a shared commitment to on-going development of the setting. Staff work as a team and meet to discuss their work. Their work is supported by the committee who have an appraisal system in place. Staff training is encouraged and liaison with support agencies assists the setting in building on their practice. Systems to evaluate how effectively the setting helps children make progress across all areas of the curriculum are not yet developed.

Partnership with parents is generally good. A variety of information is provided to inform them about what goes on in the setting and to foster links with home. Parental support is welcomed and they are given clearly defined roles to help them feel included. Parents express satisfaction with the setting and with the liaison the setting has built up with the feeder primary school. Information from parents is not being used fully to help to inform the setting about children's progress.

What is being done well?

- Children are happy and settled. They form good relationships with each other, and with the adults in the setting. They are gaining the confidence to express themselves in conversations about their homes, families and personal experiences.
- Staff encourage to share, take turns and cooperate with each other. Children know what is expected of them and behave well in response to the consistent application of rules and their self-esteem is fostered appropriately.
- Children are lively and show interest in the planned activities, responding enthusiastically to singing and music and movement session in the school hall in particular. They are developing some independence in their personal care, e.g. they learn to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Staff include opportunities for role play to develop children's imaginative skills and regular access to outdoor play for fresh air. |
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What needs to be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● the use of information from parents about their children's learning● planning, particularly in relation to the programme for mathematics and physical development● the use of assessment to inform the next steps in children's learning● strategies to assess strengths and weaknesses of the setting

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 happy and settled, they have good relationships with staff and each other. They know the routines and respond to the boundaries set for behaviour. Children begin to develop their self-esteem and show some independence in personal care tasks, e.g. handwashing. They make good use of activities set out for them and take some responsibilities, by helping to tidy up for instance. They are not always encouraged to extend their social skills e.g. taking a more active role at snack time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children talk and listen to news, enjoy songs, rhymes and stories, anticipating the parts of stories they know well. They see that print carries meaning on name cards and labels in the room. Children use books and have access to writing materials. They enjoy preparing their own letters for posting as part of the current topic. They also use worksheets but there is little adult support to help them with these.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children sometimes use puzzles, matching and sorting games and other resources to learn about shape, size and pattern. They use numbers up to 6 when looking at cars and playing dominoes, and some children talk about how old they are. But there are too few opportunities for children to count aloud within the daily routines. Staff do not extend children's learning by exploring mathematical concepts, or encourage the development of skills to solve problems presented by everyday experiences.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children talk about significant events involving their homes, families and local community. They observe the weather and seasonal changes taking place in the natural world. They show curiosity, e.g. by noting what happens when they mix cornflour and water, and use I.T. e.g. phones and a computer. Children gain awareness of their own, and other, cultures and lifestyles. The location of some resources limits children's ability to independently select materials to shape, assemble and join.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children move confidently indoors and begin to gain some awareness of space during the music and movement session in the school hall. There are limited opportunities for children to develop their skills on large apparatus particularly indoors. There are some activities which promote coordination and manipulative skills, but few that explore health and bodily awareness, for example, changes in heart rate after exercise.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children enjoy exploring colour, texture and shape using puzzles, games and sensory experiences such as making patterns in the "gloop" mixture. They move imaginatively to music and show enthusiasm to use musical instruments to accompany their singing, but have insufficient opportunities to explore these fully. Children use resources well in role play situations. However, art and craft activities tend to be adult led, which limits children's opportunities to express their own creative ideas.

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

- Ensure that planning covers all areas of the curriculum, incorporates the use of effective teaching methods, organisation of group activities and the learning opportunities presented by everyday routines. Ensure planning shows how activities are adapted to offer sufficient challenge and support to meet the differing needs and stages of development for individual children to help them make progress.
- Devise management strategies for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the setting and to appraise how successfully the Foundation Stage curriculum is being delivered, particularly in relation to the programmes for maths and physical development.
- Further develop the use of assessments to ensure that they are used effectively to inform immediate planning for individual children, to identify the next steps and build upon what children already know and can do, incorporating parental contributions into this process.

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.