



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127338

DfES Number: 543361

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	26/01/2004
Inspector Name	Jacqueline Fryer

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Little Rascals Playgroup
Setting Address	114 Queenborough Road Minster on Sea Sheerness Kent ME12 3DA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The partnership of Janice Birchmore and Joyce Harland
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Janice Birchmore and Joyce Harland
Address	114 Queenborough Road Minster on Sea Sheerness Kent ME12 3DA

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

Little Rascals Playgroup opened in 2000. It operates from a single room, in a single storey building halfway between Minster and Queenborough. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 31 children from 2 years to 5 years on roll. This includes 13 funded 3-year-olds and 14 funded 4-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently no children with special needs and the group currently supports no children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00 with an option for one hour for lunch. When numbers permit, afternoon sessions from 13.00 to 16.00 will be available.

There are four full time staff working with the children. Of these two have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Little Rascals Playgroup offers satisfactory care for children. The group offers a warm and welcoming environment where children and parents are greeted at the door. The premises are secure and staff show a good understanding of the safety requirements within the building and in the outside play area. Most policies and procedures are in place, but some need to be reviewed and completed. These include the recruitment procedures, written records of medication given, recording the times staff and children arrive and depart, the group's complaints procedures, including Ofsted's contact number, and an effective child protection policy. The person-in-charge must ensure that staff meet the qualifications requirements.

The staff show an understanding of how children learn, and through planning, look at the six areas of learning. Activities are planned to take each child's individual needs

into account. The room is well presented and the children are given some opportunities to choose their own activities. The activities are fun, stimulating and age appropriate. The staff ratios allow adults to support children well. Resources that promote equality of opportunity need to be increased.

The staff have consistent strategies in place to manage children's behaviour. Children are offered drinks and snacks. The staff discuss, with parents, any religious or cultural needs of the family. Staff show an awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. The group need to have at least one staff member with a valid first aid certificate.

The provider builds up good relationships with children, parents and staff. The parents receive information about the setting. An open door policy allows parents and staff to share any concerns with the provider. Parents' wishes are taken into account and the staff work closely with them to ensure children receive continuity of care. Times are set aside for parents and key workers to share information about children's progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the group were asked to look at developing a child protection statement, this has been done. The group now have a risk assessment procedure in place and are looking to develop this further. The group were asked to write a medication policy and inform parents of their complaints procedures. This has been implemented, but needs to be developed further by recording all medicines given to children and informing parents of Ofsted's address and contact number.

What is being done well?

- The group have a good range of toys and equipment. They use these to plan new and exciting activities to promote children's development. The children are happy and engaged in their play.
- The group ensure the premises are safe and secure for children. The children practice evacuation procedures to enable them to leave the premises safely in an emergency.
- The group offers a warm and welcoming environment. Parents and children are greeted at the entrance. Children feel safe and secure.
- The staff have good relationships with children. They spend quality time talking and playing with them. The children are happy and settled.

What needs to be improved?

- some policies and procedures, including medication, recruitment and the complaints procedure
- levels of senior staff's qualifications
- staff's first aid knowledge

- registration procedures
- staff's understanding of child protection issues
- the range of activities and resources that promote equal of opportunity.

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	Ensure registration arrangements show when staff and children are present.
2	Develop and implement an action plan that sets out how supervisors will achieve a level 3 qualification.
7	Keep a written record, signed by parents, of medicines given to children.
7	Ensure that at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate will be on the premises or on outings at any one time.
13	Develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Little Rascals Playgroup is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses.

Although the staff provide a good range of resources and work well with the children, the overall quality of the teaching has significant weaknesses. The presentation of the activities for children is disorganised. Staff's lack of knowledge of the foundation stage does not always enable the children to make appropriate progress towards the early learning goals. Staff are aware of how individual children are progressing but this is not reflected in the children's records. This results in staff not being able to adequately identify and plan children's progress in the six areas of learning. However, they are working towards the implementation of a revised planning, assessment and review system. There are procedures in place which will help the staff to provide appropriate care for children with special needs and whose first language is not English.

There is a good range of activities, which are enabling children to make generally good progress in their physical development. However, generally children are not being challenged enough to help extend their learning in all the areas. Children's behaviour is good and they are able to use the available play space confidently.

Leadership and management also shows significant weaknesses. However the staff work well together and are beginning to identify where the provision needs to make improvements. Procedures to look at staff development and the setting's strengths and weaknesses are not yet fully implemented.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Staff provide a warm welcome for parents and give them adequate written information about the setting. Regular newsletters are available. Staff are in the process of devising a system to give parents relevant and appropriate information about their children's progress.

What is being done well?

- Children's physical development is progressing well. They are able to use a wide range of tools and equipment.
- The interaction between adults and children is good. This results in the children being happy and well behaved.
- Staff provide parents with appropriate information about the setting. This helps ensure a positive partnership between the setting and parents and carers.
- Staff show commitment to improving their childcare provision. This will enable the provision to identify its strengths and weaknesses resulting in a better

quality educational programme for the children.

What needs to be improved?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● the challenges and opportunities for more able children● the provision of more child-led activities● the images of different cultures, race and disabilities● staff management and training● the effectiveness of planning, observations, assessments and reviews● the presentation and layout of the play area and activities. |
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What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children are well behaved. They are confident when using activities. Children can share and take turns well. Older children are able to sit quietly. Some activities are adult-led, restricting children to participating in one activity. There are some missed opportunities for children to select and serve themselves at snack time. Children's work is not always appropriately displayed. There are few opportunities for children to learn about other cultures and beliefs.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children are confident speakers. They enjoy stories and rhymes. Children are able to recognise their written name. There are some missed opportunities for more able children to extend their learning in the meaning and sounds of letters and words in everyday situations. There are not enough opportunities for children to mark-make in everyday situations. The book area could be made more inviting for the children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children are able to count well. They are able to recognise simple shapes. There are missed opportunities for children to learn to solve simple problems and to learn about weight, sorting, quantities and size. More able children could be set more appropriate challenges.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children are able to describe what they are seeing, feeling, hearing and smelling appropriately. They are able to describe the weather accurately and state the day, month and season. Children are competent users of the computer and other programmable toys. There are some missed opportunities for more able children to extend their learning about the world around them. There is a lack of visual images of people from different cultures, religions, gender and those with disabilities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children move around the available space confidently and with co-ordination. They are able to travel over, under, through and balance on large play equipment. Children can use a wide range of small and large equipment and tools. They enjoy running around the outdoor area. There are some missed opportunities for more able children to extend their learning about their bodies and what happens when they move around.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
Children enjoy singing songs from memory. They are able to create their own designs with the resources provided. Some craft play is too adult-led. There are some missed opportunities to use musical instruments and movement when singing songs.	
Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.	

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- review and plan the presentation of the activities and play area
- make effective use of planning and observations to identify individual children's next steps in learning
- develop staff management and training, especially in the foundation stage
- increase child-led activities.

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.