



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 401997

DfES Number: 546183

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 05/07/2004
Inspector Name Kerry Davey

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St. Joseph's Playgroup
Setting Address St. Joseph's R.C JMI School
North Road
Hertford
Hertfordshire
SG14 2BY

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of St. Joseph's Playgroup 1089180

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St. Joseph's Playgroup
Address St. Joseph's R.C JMI School
North Road
Hertford
Hertfordshire
SG14 2BY

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

St.Joseph's Playgroup opened in March 1994. It is run by a registered charity and operates from a mobile classroom in the grounds of St.Joseph's R.C. School. The group has access an enclosed outdoor area. The playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently 30 children on roll. This includes 15 funded three-year-old children. Children attend a variety of sessions each week.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions last from 09.10 to 11.30 and one afternoon from 12.40 to 15.00. The group also operate a lunch time club from 11.30 to 12.30 for nursery and playgroup children.

Seven part-time staff work with the children. Four members have early years qualifications.

How good is the Day Care?

St Josephs Playgroup offers a good standard of care for children. The group is located in a mobile classroom within the grounds of St Josephs RC JMI School. and has access to a spacious, secure outdoor area. The environment provided is warm and welcoming with colourful displays of children's artwork and photographs displayed around the room and a fun, secure garden area. Staff work well together as a team and have developed good relationships with the children. Staff know the children well and and are able to offer appropriate care and support. Most of the required documentation is in place although some additional information is required to accident records and the complaints procedure.

Staff are aware of safety issues and are active in promoting good personal hygiene procedures with the children. Children receive drinks and a varied range of snacks including different cultural fare and foods that children have made during the session to share with the whole group. Children's behaviour is valued and encouraged by the staff, they are praised constantly and respond well to the calm and sensitive approach.

Children are involved and interested in the broad range of stimulating, fun activities provided promoting learning in all areas of development. They are able to make independent choices from the resources available. Staff interact constantly with the children and participate in their activities.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are welcomed by a friendly, approachable staff team and have opportunities to chat informally about their children. Parents are provided with information regarding their children, their educational learning processes, activities provided and forthcoming events. Positive feedback has been received from parents both verbally and from the written questionnaires. Parents refer to the happy, friendly atmosphere, staff encouragement and varied play opportunities both inside and out.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the group agreed to ensure that hot water is regulated and keep a written record of medicines given to children. A system is now in place in order to regulate the hot water and medicine book has been implemented.

What is being done well?

- Staff work well together as a team and they are friendly and approachable. They make good use of space and resources which enables children to feel secure and happy and learn through their play.
- An interesting range of activities and planned outings is provided in order to give the children a range of stimulating and fun play experiences. Staff communicate well with the children and interact constantly with them asking open-ended questions to make them think.
- The environment provided is warm and welcoming for the children with bright, interesting wall displays of children's artwork and photographs. Staff have extended this in the outside play area with a range of learning opportunities available to children.
- A wide selection of play resources are provided to meet children's developmental needs. Children are able to access resources freely in order to develop their independence.
- Children are provided with a varied range of snacks including different fruits, breads and other items that they have made themselves. Their independence is encouraged through opportunities to pour their own drinks and use spreading techniques.
- Staff know children well and are able to offer appropriate care in order to meet their needs.
- Behaviour is good. Staff speak to the children kindly and sensitively and praise and encouragement is freely given.
- Staff have established effective partnerships with parents and welcome them into the setting. Information is regularly shared in various forms including informal meetings, newsletters, photographs, coffee mornings and a range of

information booklets.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

Staff have developed the outdoor play area to provide a fun and exciting area for children to play and an excellent extension of the classroom. Children are given opportunities to observe and learn about all sorts of mini beasts and creatures. They have access to a sensory area with various scented plants and opportunities to participate in the growing of plants and seeds producing a selection of flowers and vegetables and developing their understanding of the outside world. Use of drain pipes, provides children with opportunities to experiment with water play and mobiles and windchimes make the area more enchanting to children. The garden provides a wealth of learning opportunities for the children attending the play group.

What needs to be improved?

- procedures for recording arrival/departure times of staff and visitors
- procedures for obtaining parental signatures in accident records
- complaints procedure to include Ofsted details.

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
2	Implement a procedure for recording the arrival and departure times of staff and visitors.
7	Ensure that parent's signatures are obtained against all entries in the accident book.

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. Joseph's Playgroup is very good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff provide an excellent learning environment using a wide range of resources imaginatively to promote children's learning across all the six areas of the Foundation Stage. The staff's sound knowledge of how young children learn ensures that every child is able to consolidate and progress in their learning. Their enthusiasm and good teamwork ensure the smooth running of the nursery. Staff form good relationships with the children so that they feel secure, confident and eager to learn. Behaviour is excellent. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and they respond well. All children are praised, encouraged and valued.

The leadership and management is very good. The vision of the management to offer good quality and care and education, where children are happy and can play safely, is evident in the environment provided. Their enthusiasm for providing children with an effective learning atmosphere ensures that staff share the vision and work well as a team. Regular staff meetings take place and the introduction of staff appraisals ensures the setting monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery provision.

The nursery has a very good partnership with parents. They are provided with good quality information which includes professional booklets, detailing the six areas of learning and the benefits of outside play. Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning, they take home books to share and are kept informed about topics and events through newsletters and the parent's information board. Parents are kept fully informed about their children's learning and progress and can talk to the friendly and approachable staff informally at the end of the session.

What is being done well?

- Staff are friendly, caring and committed to provide a secure learning environment for the children. They have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. This enables them to provide well organised sessions and a wide range of stimulating activities across all areas of learning. Activities are well thought out and link to current topics.
- Children's personal, social and emotional skills are very good. Children are motivated to learn, they concentrate and persevere at their tasks and are able to select resources for themselves and work independently.
- Children are developing sound language, literacy and communication skills,

extending their vocabulary and interacting effectively with one another and adults. They learn letter sounds and writing for different purposes is encouraged. Staff successfully promote the enjoyment of books. They bring stories to life for the children, using an excellent range of story sacks.

- Children have very good opportunities to explore, investigate and observe a wide range of living things and seeds they plant both inside and outside the environment. They watch tadpoles, butterflies, vegetables, flowers and herbs grow and change. Through hanging compact disc mobiles they learn about the reflection of natural light and prisms and they watch what happens to them as they blow in the wind. As part of the children's topic work on dinosaurs they observe fossils and create their own out of clay.
- Children are provided with stimulating and fun opportunities to develop their imagination. Staff provide a wide range of props for inspiration such as pirate and road safety resources.

What needs to be improved?
● children's knowledge of different cultures.

What has improved since the last inspection?
N/A

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy, interested and well motivated to learn. They show independence as they make choices, and can concentrate well. They take turns and share, and become interested and involved in their play, which underpins their learning in many areas. There are very good relationships between staff and children and behaviour is excellent. Children are developing and extending their personal independence, for example when giving out cups and snacks, spreading French toast and pouring drinks.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children use language effectively to communicate with one another and with adults. They listen to stories attentively and use books both for pleasure and gaining information. The setting successfully promotes the enjoyment of books and story sacks. Children learn letter sounds and are beginning to form letters correctly. Older children write their name, and use writing for different purposes such as practising mark making in role play situations and in Mother's day cards.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are given many opportunities to use numbers and learn the concept of counting within routine activities. Staff support children well and make good use of mathematical language. Children calculate as they decide how many more biscuits or cups are needed and how many they have altogether. Puzzles and activities help with matching, sorting and sequencing. Free play with sand and water introduces concepts of quantity and measure; these skills are used when cooking.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are developing early scientific skills through effective use of a good range of resources. Through topic work they learn to care for living things and enjoy watching tadpoles, caterpillars and seeds they plant, grow and change. Children use magnifying glasses to observe insects; they create their own clay fossils. They use the computer with confidence and learn about time as they say the days of the week rhyme. Children enjoy French activities as they practise bonjour and recite numbers.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have opportunities to develop and refine their physical skills using an effective range of small and large equipment both inside and outside. Children move with confidence and imagination. They are aware of basic hygiene routines and learn about the effects of exercise on their bodies. Hand eye coordination and fine motor control is developed by using a range of tools to cut, spread, cook and make marks. Staff provide children with excellent learning opportunities in the outside play area.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children explore colour and texture in two and three dimensions using craft materials as they create paper Mache models and glittery snails trails. They enjoy playing musical instruments as they march to Humpty Dumpty. Children are provided with stimulating opportunities to develop their imagination through role play with good use of props for inspiration such as pirate and road crossing resources. They enjoy music and movement sessions as they crawl like worms and wave streamers in the air.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following:
- provide more opportunities to extend the children's knowledge of different cultures.

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.