



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY279102

DfES Number: 520382

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 07/10/2004
Inspector Name Pamela Edna Friling

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St Paul's Playgroup
Setting Address New Street
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL1 5BD

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of St Pauls Playgroup

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Pauls Playgroup
Address c/o Mrs A Hood
1 New Street
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL1 5AZ

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. Paul's Playgroup first opened in 1987 and moved to the present premises in 2004. It operates from a playroom and designated garden area at St Paul's Primary School in the inner city area of Gloucester. The playgroup has access to the school hall, infant toilet facilities and playground. Most of the children come from the local area with a wide range of cultural and social backgrounds.

There are currently 26 children from two years to under five years on roll. This includes nineteen funded three-year-olds and one funded four-year-old. Children attend for a variety of sessions according to requirements. The playgroup cares for children who have special needs, and the group supports those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens during school term times for five sessions a week. These take place from 09.00 until 12.00.

St Paul's Playgroup is managed by a committee of parents, carers, volunteers and a school governor. Four staff work with the children and all have Early Years qualifications, one to level three and another to level two. Parents of the children who attend also help out at the group.

The setting receives teacher support from the Early Years Childcare Services Foundation Stage Consultants. It is a member of the local Playgroup and Toddler Association.

How good is the Day Care?

Saint Paul's Playgroup provides satisfactory care for the children who attend.

Staff work together as a team to provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere for children

and their parents. Wall displays are bright and interesting.

Staff conduct visual safety checks on a daily basis but these have failed to highlight the risk of accident from trailing power and telephone cables. Written risk assessments have not been conducted. Staff deployment during outdoor play is not effective in monitoring children's play in all areas. The premises are secure and there are good systems for monitoring visitors.

A range of activities and free-play opportunities are provided which promote children's development and independence. However, developmental progress is not systematically monitored to ensure children build on skills. Staff meet children's care needs well through sensitive and appropriate interactions that promote children's self esteem and co-operative behaviour. Children are given a good range of snacks and have independent access to food and drink during the session. Staff have built positive relationships with the children and take an interest in what they say and do. Resources and activities encourage children's awareness of culture, race and disability. Toys are easily available to encourage choice.

Parents are welcomed into the playgroup. They are given general information about the care their children receive but more limited information on activities and developmental progress.

Most policies and procedures are in place, although a number of procedures lack detail and clarity. There is no procedure for complaints or for actions the group would take if a child was lost or uncollected. There are clear procedures for administration of first aid and medication. However, parental signatures have not been obtained for all accident records and permission has not been requested for emergency medical attention.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable as this is the first inspection since registration at this venue.

What is being done well?

- Staff meet the care needs of the children well and provide a warm welcome for children and their parents.
- Play resources are stored appropriately in clearly labelled boxes to promote choice and independence.
- Children's awareness of culture, race and disability is encouraged effectively through good play resources and planned activities.
- Children have independent access to a good range of food and drink throughout the session.

What needs to be improved?

- procedures for informing Ofsted of serious injuries or infectious notifiable diseases

- policies and procedures for complaints, lost or uncollected children, child protection and signing of accident reports by parents
- permission from parents for emergency medical attention
- safety of premises and deployment of staff during outdoor play

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 must take the following actions by the date shown

Std	Action	Date
14	Develop and implement statements of procedures for if a child is lost or uncollected.	01/01/2005

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
6	Conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying actions to be taken to minimize identified risks including trailing cables and staff deployment during outdoor play.
12	Ensure procedure for complaints includes details of the regulator.
13	Ensure that the child protection procedure for the playgroup includes actions that would be taken if there were allegations against a staff member.
7	Ensure staff are aware of the need to inform Ofsted of any serious injuries or infectious notifiable diseases; ask for parental permission to seek emergency medical attention; and ask parents to sign all accident records.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St. Paul's Playgroup provides acceptable nursery education but has some significant areas for improvement. Children are making generally good progress in some areas of learning but there are significant weaknesses in others.

The staff team provides a happy, relaxed environment for the children but the quality of teaching has significant weaknesses. Staff demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the early learning goals, but have not used this sufficiently to develop a systematic approach to the observation and assessment of the children. Consequently planning does not fully support children's individual learning and progress. Children are not sufficiently challenged to build on what they know; particularly in the development of early writing skills and the limited opportunities for them to share ideas and news with the whole group.

Resources are well organised to allow children to develop good independent skills as they choose activities, prepare their snacks and take care of their personal needs. They settle well to familiar routines. Staff encourage and praise children effectively to develop their self esteem and co-operative behaviour.

Staff are approachable and have good relationships with parents and carers. However, overall there are significant weaknesses. Parents do not receive good information about the Foundation Stage. This limits their involvement in their children's learning. Also they are not well informed about planned activities and their children's progress towards the early learning goals.

The play leaders show enthusiasm and are keen to develop the quality of education. However, there are significant weaknesses in the effectiveness of leadership and management. In particular the system for monitoring and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the education is ineffective. As a result, limited progress is made in addressing areas of weakness within the provision, some of which were highlighted at the last inspection.

What is being done well?

- Staff are welcoming, friendly, approachable and caring towards the children and have formed good relationships with them and parents.
- Staff are enthusiastic and keen to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Children have good independent skills.

What needs to be improved?

- procedures for the observation and assessment of children's learning and progress

- evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education provided
- planning to maximise individual learning and challenge
- information for parents to ensure they are fully informed of their child's activities and progress and are able to be involved in their learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Progress since the last inspection has been limited. The group were asked to improve records of children's ability and progress, so that planning can build on children's existing knowledge. The group have not made progress in this area. There is no systematic observation or assessment of children and consequently plans are not well informed or differentiated to meet individual needs.

The group were also asked to improve planning and communication, so that all adults working with children are aware of the possible and expected learning outcomes of activities that are set out each day. Planning is very general and although linked to the areas of learning is limited in its content with regard to daily activities. Staff approach to the planned activities is inconsistent as no detailed plan exists to inform them of the staff responsibility, learning objectives, grouping or required resources.

Finally the group were asked to improve the frequency of activities to promote children's learning in mathematics. Children now have daily planned activities to extend their awareness of mathematics but the lack of systematic observation and assessment limits the ability of staff to plan activities that challenge children to build on what they already know.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children relate well to staff and are beginning to develop relationships with their peers. They settle quickly to familiar routines. Children share resources well as they take part in group and individual activities. They show growing independence and confidence as they prepare snacks and choose activities. Most children behave well; however children do not always receive explanation of why certain behaviour is unacceptable.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children speak confidently with adults and their peers. However, there are limited opportunities for children to share news and ideas with the whole group. They use books correctly and independently and enjoy small group stories. There are few opportunities for children to further develop early writing and reading skills and missed opportunities for children to use print in activities. Staff do not routinely encourage correct letter formation or extend knowledge of letter sounds.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children can count confidently to ten as a group and show developing awareness of basic shapes. More able children are encouraged to perform simple practical calculations as they play through effective staff questioning. However, children's progress is limited because observation and assessment do not highlight next steps in learning, so enabling children to build on prior knowledge. There are limited planned opportunities for children to develop sorting, matching and pattern making skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are beginning to talk about their life experiences and explore and investigate natural objects. Staff provide resources to encourage close observation of nature as children look at mini-beasts with magnifying glasses. There are insufficient opportunities for children to develop their computer skills or explore other forms of technology. Children are developing awareness of other cultures and beliefs through planned topics and easy access to appropriate play resources.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are beginning to develop fine motor skills and handle small equipment with confidence as they spread butter on toast, pour drinks and take part in cutting activities. They move with confidence and control and are beginning to develop a good sense of space within the room. There are insufficient opportunities for children to build on existing climbing, balancing and manoeuvring skills through limited free access to appropriate resources and outdoor play space.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy role play and use resources creatively. They initiate their own play scenarios, such as explorers using coats and a torch to make a den, and a trip to Gloucester to buy shoes. Some staff extend learning through effective questioning and involvement in the play. Children express themselves through painting, white board drawing and whole group model building. Opportunities for independent exploration of music and craft are limited. Children join in familiar songs with enthusiasm.

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's 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

- Develop a system for observation and assessment of the children to ensure their progress can be monitored
- Extend planning to ensure all children are challenged to build on what they already know and can do. Ensure all activities have clear learning objectives and that daily activity plans contain sufficient detail
- Implement more rigorous systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the educational provision to enable self evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the group
- Develop ways of providing parents with information about the Foundation Stage, children's activities, learning and their progress in relation to the early learning goals.

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.