



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 303810

DfES Number: 520793

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	02/06/2003
Inspector Name	Barbara Ridgway

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Sowood Pre-School Playgroup
Setting Address	Sowood Community Centre Stainland Road, Sowood Halifax West Yorkshire HX4 9HY

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Dionne Doyne
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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

Sowood Playgroup operates in the Community Centre in Sowood between Huddersfield and Halifax. The playgroup has been registered since 1973. There is a large hall, play room, two side rooms, kitchen and toilet facilities. There is an enclosed area to the side for outdoor play.

The playgroup offers sessional care for a maximum of 16 children aged from two years to five years. Children attend for a variety of days. The group supports children with special needs.

The playgroup opens from 9:00 am until 11:30 am on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and from 12:30 pm until 3:00 pm on Monday, and runs in term time only. There is a team of 3 staff who work with the children, managed by a voluntary committee of parents. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Sowood Playgroup provides satisfactory care overall for children aged two to five years.

Staff give high priority to providing a welcoming and safe environment, and have clear routines that help children to feel secure. They give attention to developing children's understanding of good hygiene practices. Staff have a good awareness of individual children's needs and ensure these are met. There are appropriate and positive strategies for managing children's behaviour.

The staff team work well together, and all attend regular meetings to ensure that they maintain a consistent approach.

The quality of care is good. Staff show friendly relationships with children. A good range of toys and equipment are provided for children to select from, and this provides appropriate challenge for a variety of abilities. Staff's participation and

interaction with the children is very good. There is a good partnership established with parents and carers.

Information is exchanged on a day to day basis regarding individual children, and there are opportunities for parents to become actively involved in the running of the group. Policies and procedures, notice boards and regular newsletters give information about curriculum planning and the setting.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure that there was a system in place for recording medication and obtaining prior written consent. This is now in operation. The deputy leader has enrolled on a level 3 course to start in September 2003. The provider also has developed policies and procedures to include a procedure for lost or uncollected children, and updated information to include the name and address of Ofsted. The provider also agreed to develop an operational plan and this is in place. There is now a visitor book, and accurate times of arrival and departure of children are recorded.

What is being done well?

- - The established staff team work well together to provide a safe and comfortable environment in which the children feel confident, secure and understand boundaries.
- - The staff interact well with the children and work at their level, offering much praise and encouragement.
- - The routine allows for appropriate activities with small groups of children.
- - The communication with parents is effective, there is a keyworker system in place, and parents are kept up to date with information about what the children are experiencing.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

There are many opportunities for the children to develop mathematical thinking and understanding

What needs to be improved?

- - the system for recording what the children do, and using this information to plan for the next steps in children's play and learning;
- - the routine and access to all areas of the curriculum, to ensure that children are able to make choices with regard to access to physical activity, construction and imaginative floor play;
- - the layout of the provision, to ensure that there is comfortable access to floor activities;
- - the safety checklist, so that all rooms used are checked daily;

- - the play provision, to include more positive images and promote anti-discriminatory practice.

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
3	extend the provision to ensure that the children are able to make choices with regard to access to physical activity, construction and imaginative floor play
3	improve the system for recording what the children do and use this information to plan for the next steps in children's play and learning
4	improve layout to ensure that children have sufficient space for floor activities
9	improve provision by increasing resources with positive images
10	refer to EYDCP for advice to ensure that children with special needs receive adequate support
6	ensure that the safety checklist is completed daily for all rooms used

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Sowood Playgroup provides a comfortable learning environment for young children. Children are happy and confident and are able to make generally good progress towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Progress made in personal, social and emotional development, mathematics development and in physical development is very good. Children make generally good progress in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in creative development.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a basic awareness of the ELGs. The staff's knowledge regarding the stepping stones needs to be improved as this reflects in some missed opportunities to extend children's learning, and limited challenges set for the children. This also affects the observations and assessments that are made. Staff provide a wide range of activities which are made available for children to self select. Relationships with children are warm, friendly and supportive. Staff manage behaviour well and demonstrate caring relationships with children.

Leadership and management within the setting is generally good. Management is able to assess its own strengths and weaknesses, and demonstrates a commitment to improvement. The playgroup is organised by a voluntary committee, and a manager is responsible for the day to day running of the group. Monitoring systems are in place to appraise staff and assess their training and development needs. Paperwork is maintained to a good standard, and the policies and procedures are effective.

Partnership with parents is generally good, and they are encouraged to contribute in several ways to the provision. Parents are provided with good written information about the setting and activities experienced by the children. Parents have access to a notice board and newsletters. There is however limited information on children's developmental progress available.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is good. Children are confident, sociable and happy and are able to maintain good and caring relationships with each other and adults. Staff encourage children to be aware of themselves and their environment, and provide appropriate resources to stimulate interest. Children are independent, they have opportunities to self select from a range of activities during the session.
- Children demonstrate good mathematical skills and there are opportunities for expressing these and recording results in a wide variety of ways.
- Staff work very well as a team, and plan and provide a varied range of stimulating activities for the children.

- Staff are supportive and encourage good behaviour within the setting.
- The curriculum is planned and presented in a child-centred environment.
- Parental involvement is encouraged and contributions are welcomed. Information regarding the provision readily available.

What needs to be improved?

- The children's assessment and achievement records to ensure that staff are aware of children's stage of learning, and are able to plan for the next step and offer appropriate challenges.
- The teaching methods to encourage children to form letters and know them, and to be able to link written letters to sounds.
- The opportunities to investigate how everyday things work, how things happen, and ask questions.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

Some small group activities have been developed for the older and more able children. The children are taken into a separate room for short periods of time. This has been effective in lessening distraction from the younger children and allowing for a more teacher-directed approach.

Resources to develop mathematical understanding have been purchased and there is much evidence in the activities provided that indicate a good improvement in this area of learning. Children are encouraged to relate number and mathematical language within all areas of the setting, and there is provision for them to record the results.

The opportunity for developing writing skills has improved. Children have access to a markmaking table for most of the session. This area of provision needs further planning and development to encourage children's letter formation and help their understanding of linking letters to sounds.

The resources for physical development have been improved to provide opportunities for children to increase their skills when using small and large equipment both indoors and outdoors. There has been some new shelving purchased and this provides children with improved access to equipment.

The programme for staff development has been reviewed and one staff member has booked on an appropriate training course due to start in September. A training course on planning has been accessed and this is now more effective.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. They are confident and happy, and are interested and motivated to learn. They have good relationships with adults and each other. They show concern for each other and their environment, and have an awareness of boundaries and behavioural expectations of the setting. They have opportunities to make choices and work independently or within group situations.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children make generally good progress in communication, language and literacy. They interact, and talk with peers and adults fluently. They listen and speak within small groups. However, they lack opportunities to respond to phonic activities, linking letters to sounds. Children listen to stories, enjoy looking at books themselves and understand that they contain material that gives them pleasure and information. Children make marks and some are beginning to form letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children make very good progress in mathematical development. Most children are able to count accurately up to ten and beyond, and they are encouraged to record numbers. They enjoy number songs and are able to relate number to objects within their environment. They are beginning to use mathematical concepts, and understand mathematical language. There are many opportunities to solve practical problems. Children learn about shape and size through planned activity and practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children's progress in knowledge and understanding of the world is generally good. They show an awareness and understanding of other cultures. Some children are confident in using the computer. There are opportunities to explore the use of a wider variety of tools for assembling materials. However, there is limited access to resources and simple interesting activities to learn about how and why things work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are making very good progress in physical development. They have access to a wide range of equipment for use both indoors and outdoors. They learn about health and hygiene. Children are able to handle a variety of tools adeptly for markmaking, explore malleable materials, cut and assemble materials. They have opportunity to use small and large equipment and to move imaginatively to music.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
<p>Children make generally good progress in creative development. They have access to a wide variety of resources and materials to explore texture, shape and colour, two and three dimensional, and painting and drawing. However, they have limited opportunity to further develop their ideas. They are able to express themselves and communicate ideas in role play situations. Children enjoy joining in familiar songs and actions.</p>	

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

- develop the children's assessment and achievement records to ensure that staff are aware of children's stage of learning, and are able to plan for the next step and offer appropriate challenges;
- improve the teaching methods to encourage children to form letters and know them, and to be able to link written letters to sounds;
- extend the opportunities for children to investigate how everyday things work and how things happen.

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.