



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 304981

DfES Number: 582872

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 29/09/2004
Inspector Name Jane Shaw

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Out of School Day Care, Full Day Care
Setting Name Black Firs Play Group
Setting Address Longdown Road
Congleton
Cheshire
CW12 4QJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Black Firs Playgroup 1044301

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Black Firs Playgroup
Address Black Firs Primary School
Longdown Road
Congleton
Cheshire
CW12 4QJ

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

Black Firs Playgroup and Out of School committee are registered to provide care for a maximum of 30 children within the playgroup and 30 children within the after school club. Mrs Rosemary Cook is the nominated person acting on behalf of the committee.

The playgroup offer pre-school activities to children aged two to five years on a full day care basis, and operate from Monday to Friday from 9:15 to 15:30 term time only.

The after school club offers before and after school care to children aged three years and above, they operate from Monday to Friday from 07:45 to 08:45 and from 15:20 to 18:00, term time only.

Both groups operate from a double mobile within the grounds of Black Firs Primary School, which is located in the West Heath area of Congleton.

The children have access to two main play rooms, toilets and hand washing facilities. The playgroup children have access to their own enclosed outdoor play area. The after school children have access to the school playground and field.

The playgroup is in receipt of funding for both three and four-year-olds.

There are currently 28 children on the playgroup register, one of whom is aged four years and 26 aged three, 21 of whom are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children who have been identified special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are supported within the group.

There are six members of staff who work directly with the playgroup children, four of whom are appropriately qualified, with a further one currently undertaking training.

As the playgroup are in receipt of funding for nursery education, they have access to a Foundation Stage teacher and other advisory staff from Sure Start Cheshire.

There are currently sixty children attending the Out of School Club. Four members of staff work directly with the out of school children, one of whom is appropriately qualified.

How good is the Day Care?

Black Firs Playgroup and After School Club are providing satisfactory care.

Both groups are well organised in terms of staff ratios and the use of available space both in and outdoors to offer the children a good range of opportunities. Activities are supported by a good range of toys, equipment and other resources. Staff within the playgroup are well qualified and committed to extending their knowledge through their attendance of various courses. Staffing within the out of school club does not yet reach the required qualification ratio. All relevant documentation is in place, however, a minor amendment is required to the attendance register.

Children are cared for in a safe environment, regular risk assessments are conducted to ensure all areas are safe. Children attending the out of school club should be encouraged to sit when eating meals to ensure the safety of others. Both groups offer the children healthy snacks and meals with access to drinks at all times. Playgroup children use the school dining hall for lunch, this is appropriately supervised by staff, children are confident and settled during this period. Playgroup staff have a good awareness of child protection and other policies and procedures, but this is an area which needs to be addressed with out of school staff.

Children attending both provisions are offered a good range of activities and opportunities. Playgroup staff plan activities in line with the Foundation Stage, involving the children in stimulating activities organised around themes. After school children have access to various activities, but have the flexibility to choose what they would like to be involved in. Staff ensure that all children are given appropriate support to participate. Appropriate behaviour management policies ensure children receive praise and encouragement.

An effective partnership with parents and carers is in place, they speak positively about what the groups have to offer their children.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the registered person was asked to address six actions, which related to staffing issues, records, policies and the provision of a third adult sized toilet to enable the registration numbers to increase.

In relation to staffing, the registered person was asked to ensure that all staff undergo appropriate clearance. This is now completed as staff are appointed. Some new staff are still going through the process, but evidence of all other staff clearance is available. The registered provider keeps good records showing staff clearances, personal details and records of qualifications and training attended.

A second action asked the group to ensure that attendance registers show the actual times of arrival and departure of all children on a daily basis. Staff now record the arrival of children in both the playgroup and out of school club registers, parents or carers are asked to record the time they collect the children along with their signature.

Three actions related to policies and procedures, they asked the registered provider to produce a special needs statement for the out of school club, include contact details for Ofsted in the complaints procedure and to develop an operational plan for the playgroup. All amendments have now been made.

The final action asked the registered person to provide a third toilet to meet the required number of toilets and hand washing facilities. It was recommended that this toilet be adult sized to enable staff and older children within the out of school club to use this. This has now be installed.

The completion of all actions ensures that both provisions are meeting the national standards in terms of appropriate toilet and hand washing requirements, that accurate records are maintained and that both staff, parents and carers have access to policies and procedures.

What is being done well?

- The provision for pre-school children is good. Staff plan a good range of activities and opportunities for the children, which involves them in interesting and stimulating experiences. These activities are supported by a good range of resources and equipment. Staff give good support to all children and make appropriate arrangements to enable all children to participate. Good staff ratios provides the children with effective support and encouragement.
- Good opportunities are made available within the playgroup for staff training, staff are well qualified, are committed to and have opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge by attending many courses. A member of staff within the playgroup team acts as a training mentor for all staff. All members of staff have designated roles within the team. This development adds to the quality of activities provided for the children.
- A bright and welcoming environment for both the playgroup, out of school children, and parents and carers is provided. Good use is made of children's work, through colourful displays and books connected to themes, and the use of different textures/materials and lighting.
- A good range of interesting and appropriate activities are made available for the out of school children, both in and out of doors. Staff have a flexible approach to the provision of activities and experiences, making these available at all times, but allowing the children the freedom to choose what they would like to be involved in.

What needs to be improved?

- the formulation of an action plan detailing how the 50% ratio of qualified staff will be met (Out of School Care)
- the nomination of a deputy who is suitably qualified and able to take charge in the absence of the Person in Charge (Out of School Care)
- ensure staff are aware of the National Standards, the club's policies, and in particular the child protection and uncollected child procedures (Out of School Care)
- ensure that the actual times of arrival and departure of all staff is recorded on a daily basis (Full Day Care & Out of School Care)
- make sure that snack time is a safe activity, by encouraging children to sit down during this period. (Out of School Care)
- amend the child protection policy to show the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. (Out of School Care)

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
2	develop an action plan that sets out how staff training and qualification requirements will be met.(Out of School Care)	01/12/2004

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

Std	Recommendation
6	make sure that snack time does not pose a safety risk
14	ensure staff are aware of the National Standards, the group's policies, and in particular, develop (staff's) knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, and the procedure to be followed in the event of an

	uncollected child. (Out of School Care)
13	amend the child protection policy to show the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. (Out of School Care)
2	ensure that there is a named deputy who is suitably qualified and able to take charge in the absence of the Person in Charge. (Out of School Care)
2	ensure that the actual times of arrival and departure of all staff is recorded on a daily basis. (Full Day Care & Out of School Care)

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision of funded nursery education at Black Firs playgroup is acceptable and of high quality which enables the children to make very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a good understanding of the Early Learning Goals and how children learn, they are committed to continued training. Good staff ratios ensure that the children are well supervised and supported by staff in all their activities. Appropriate resources are made available to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to participate fully. Activities are appropriately matched to the children's level of skill and development as a group, and as individuals, to provide them with sufficient challenge. There is a well planned programme of activities and experiences in all six areas, more opportunities for children to freely use books quietly is a point for consideration.

The leadership and management of the setting is very good. Staff have clearly defined roles within the playgroup and work well as a team. There are regular staff meetings which involve the planning of the curriculum, the evaluating of activities, establishing the next steps for children and the sharing of information from training courses. Staff constantly evaluate the provision and all are committed to the further development and improvement of what the setting has to offer. Staff and the provision in general are well supported by the registered person.

The playgroup's partnership with parents and carers is effective. Parents and carers have access to written information on the educational provision and the Early Learning Goals, through the group's welcome booklet. Information on plans, present and forthcoming topics is available through regular newsletters. Parents and carers have introductory visits to the group to meet staff and discuss what the setting has to offer and are able to view assessment records at any time.

What is being done well?

- All staff work well with children with special educational needs and include them in all activities. Staff work in partnership with parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure children gain as much as possible from activities. All staff are aware of children's individual needs which ensures that there is a consistent approach to children's learning and development.
- Mathematics is given a high priority within the setting, staff use every available opportunity through sessions to introduce and encourage children's understanding of numbers, counting and other mathematical concepts.
- Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn best, they are committed to on-going training and development. Good staff ratios enables children to have effective support, communication and

interaction in their activities.

What needs to be improved?

- more opportunities for children to freely use books for quiet times, both with or without adult support.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting have made very good progress in response to the two key issues made following the last inspection in 2000.

The setting were asked to devise procedures for identifying and working with children who have special educational needs in order to help them to progress towards clear learning targets. Evidence, both written and observational, is available to show that staff work well with children identified as having special educational needs. The designated special educational needs co-coordinator retains good records on children's progress and achievements, the next steps and she liaises with other professionals, parents and carers. Other members of staff within the group are clear of their role in working with particular children, this ensures that there is a consistent approach to children's learning and development.

The second key issue asked that the setting provide opportunities for the children to associate letter sounds with patterns in rhymes with syllables. Children are introduced to letters sounds as they are involved in bringing items for the letter of the week table and as they identify the day of the week and month of the year. Staff read stories that rhyme, where children are asked and are able to predict what the rhyming word might be.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children are confident and independent arriving at playgroup happy and eager. They are independent as they select toys, equipment, decide upon activities to be involved in and undertake personal tasks. They are developing relationships with one another, playing co-operatively at activities and saying goodbye to each other at the end of the session. Children have been involved in making a 'friendship tree'. Staff encourage the children to share and take turns with toys and equipment.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

With staff support and encouragement children show confidence when speaking in front of others and are developing good language and vocabulary skills. They are able to think and describe the feel of and name objects in a 'feely bag'. They sit quietly and listen to appropriately pitched stories which are well read by staff, having opportunities to join in. Children have access to a range of books, more opportunities to access these independently for quiet times would benefit children further.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Staff include mathematics in many activities during each session and as a result children are developing their understanding of number, counting and other mathematical concepts as they count each other at register time, the number of cups needed at snack time, the number of people on their bus. During a 'feely bag' activity children are asked to think whether objects are big or small, during the imaginary bus journey, children are introduced to the concept how many left as passengers get off.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children have access to a range of technological toys and equipment and are able to use these skilfully. They competently design and make three-dimensional models from a range of construction toys and equipment, building train tracks and other models. They are confidently able to recall events as they talk about their journey to playgroup, going on holiday to Scotland and what they had for breakfast. Through planned themes and activities, children are able to consider how other people live.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Access to a range of equipment and activities enables the children to develop their physical skills. They use small tools and equipment with competence using scissors, paintbrushes, play dough cutters and pencils as they write. They move confidently and safely around the room and practice climbing, crawling through and cycling as they play outdoors. During a focused circle time activity children successfully pass a bell around the group without it ringing and a cup of water without spilling any.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Displays of children's work shows they are able to use a variety of textures and techniques in their art and craft work. Opportunities are available for children to use natural materials, using leaves, twigs and feathers. They have opportunities to be involved in experimental play, using water, sand, play dough. Role-play, both with and without adult support, enables the children to use their imagination and language. Children have free access to musical instruments daily, singing and tapes.

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 the following point for development should be considered in the Action Plan:
- provide additional opportunities for children to freely use books for quiet times, both with or without adult support.

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.