



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127535

DfES Number: 580444

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 24/06/2004
Inspector Name Beth Kingsland

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Shepherdswell Playgroup
Setting Address Village Hall
Cox Hill, Shepherdswell
Dover
Kent
CT15 7LJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Shepherdswell Playgroup

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Shepherdswell Playgroup
Address Shepherdswell Village Hall
Cox Hill, Shepherdswell
Dover
Kent
CT15 7NH

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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

Shepherdswell Playgroup is a committee run pre-school that first opened in 1972. The playgroup is situated within the rural village of Shepherdswell, and occupies premises within the village hall. The playgroup serves families from the local community and the wider surrounding area.

There are currently 32 children on roll, 9 of whom are funded 3-year-olds and 15 of whom are funded 4-year-olds. The playgroup has experience in providing for children with identified special needs. Currently, none of the children speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.15 to 15.00.

There are eight staff who work with the children on a rota basis, five of whom hold an early years qualification and have attended short courses. Three members of staff are currently attending qualification courses.

The group receives support from a Pre-School Learning Alliance development worker and a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Shepherdswell Playgroup 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 overall quality of teaching has significant weaknesses. Although staff generally work positively with children, encouraging them to be confident, their lack of knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, inhibits children's progress, including those children with identified special educational needs.

Although staff provide a range of activities throughout the session, they do not generally challenge children during the activities they complete. As a result activities lack opportunities for children to use their imaginations to solve a range of practical problems. Staff are not always effectively deployed to extend and develop children's learning within the programmes for personal and social, mathematical and creative development. Staff provide insufficient opportunities for children to use their initiative to develop their own ideas and to independently select from the wide selection of resources.

The effectiveness of assessment and curriculum planning has significant weaknesses. Staff do not make effective use of assessment in order to inform the planning of activities.

The overall quality of leadership and management has significant weaknesses. Although weaknesses have been identified within the management of the setting, no procedures have been implemented in order to evaluate and review the effectiveness of the playgroup practice.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents are greeted warmly by staff and receive informal opportunities to learn about children's progress and attainment. Parents regularly help out within the session. Although staff provide parents with information about the setting and its provision, they receive insufficient opportunities to learn about the full range of activities provided.

What is being done well?

- Children are provided with regular opportunities to find their names. Children independently identify their names throughout the daily session.
- Staff are beginning to question children during the activities they complete. Children communicate and express their ideas freely throughout the session.
- Children know each other well. They are confident and have developed good relationships together.

What needs to be improved?

- staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional, mathematics and creative development
- the use of assessment in order to identify what children need to learn next and to guide planning
- the organisation of activities, and staff deployment, throughout the session, in order to effectively, question, challenge, manage and support all children during the activities they complete
- the leadership and management of the setting
- the partnership with parents and carers.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The playgroup has made limited progress in addressing the key issues highlighted from the previous inspection. This has had a poor impact on children's learning and development. Staff have not given priority to the planning, teaching and assessment of children's progress within the programme of mathematics. Children receive limited opportunities to take part in practical mathematical activities that allow them to solve simple problems.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Some positive relationships have been developed within the playgroup. Children generally work well together, showing some levels of confidence. They are generally encouraged towards personal independence; however, opportunities for them to select resources for themselves are limited. The children generally behave well, however, the lack of effective planning and management of the activities result in children becoming restless, for example, at circle time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children speak confidently together in groups, communicating their ideas during free-play. They receive good opportunities to use and enjoy books. Children are provided with opportunities to access a variety of equipment to write as part of their play. Staff do not make effective use of planned discussion activities to develop and extend children's language skills. Although children are introduced to letters of the alphabet, staff fail to support this through practical learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Poor

Children receive some opportunities to count and recognise shapes as part of formal activities. A good range of mathematical equipment is available within the playgroup. However, staff fail to provide opportunities for children to solve simple problems as part of practical and free-play activities. Staff exhibit a limited knowledge of the stepping stones within this area of learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are able to access a variety of equipment for construction. Staff provide a range of formal investigation activities that allow children to explore the properties of different materials. However, staff fail to effectively challenge children during free investigation activities. Children receive insufficient opportunities to learn about everyday technology.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children receive regular opportunities to move safely and freely both inside and out. This provides them with opportunities to show an awareness of themselves and others. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their small manipulative skills. However, staff do not use information from children's assessment to develop their skills further.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Poor

The children receive insufficient opportunities to respond to a variety of experiences. Staff lead many of the provided activities, with children receiving limited opportunities to express their own ideas. The lack of planned activities and access to a range of materials and tools inhibits opportunities for children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings.

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

- increase all staff's knowledge and understanding of how to plan, use and extend daily activities and routines to help children make effective progress towards the early learning goals within personal, social and emotional, mathematical and creative development
- make effective use of assessment in order to identify individual children's next steps in learning and use any information gained from assessment to inform the planning of activities
- increase the effectiveness with which staff support children, by providing regular opportunities for children to use their initiative throughout the daily routine
- develop the leadership and management of the setting in order to support staff with the care they provide to children.

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.