



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 110024

DfES Number: 513812

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	12/02/2004
Inspector Name	Sheila Collins

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Castle Hill Playgroup
Setting Address	Kenilworth Road Basingstoke Hampshire RG23 8JQ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Ms Frances Fothergill
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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

Castle Hill pre school is situated within the site of Fort Hill Community School in the area of Winklebury on the edge of Basingstoke.

The group is divided between two rooms, one based in a school classroom and the other based in a new purpose built portacabin unit. The rooms allow sufficient space for 21 and 26 children respectively a total of 47 children. The group is open Monday - Friday 08:00 - 18:00 and offers sessional and full day care sessions and takes children from two years nine months to five years old.

The group currently has 51 children attending 36 children who are in receipt of funding. Three children attending have special needs and the group has a trained co-ordinator who offers support. The group has concern for children with English as an additional language.

There are 18 staff 17 who work with the funded children. More than half of staff are qualified with NVQ 2's or above, two staff are currently undertaking a foundation degree in early years care and education

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The nursery education provision at Castle Hill Playgroup is acceptable and of good quality. Children are making generally good progress in the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Communication, language, literacy, mathematics, creative, physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are generally well taught. Staff have appropriate expectations of the children in personal, social and emotional development. Well planned activities engage and sustain the children's interests and efforts but plans do not clearly show how more or less able children will be catered for. Children are confident and keen to be involved in activities provided. They have some opportunities to be independent and make choices, although older children have limited opportunities to choose resources for themselves when undertaking creative projects. There are good resources to support all areas of learning.

Leadership and management in the playgroup is effective. Relationships between staff and children are good and staff have clear expectations of acceptable behaviour, as a result the children are confident and generally behave well. Children are assessed regularly, using a format linked to the early learning goals, although not all staff are confident in this. Staff give children opportunities to repeat, consolidate and extend their learning in a variety of ways and are continuing to develop their own knowledge of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

The playgroup has a good partnership with parents and carers. Parents are well informed about the routines and curriculum and have opportunities to see daily the records kept on their child through the home school link books. They have some opportunities to be involved with their child's learning through activities such as bringing in items for topics from home.

What is being done well?

- Relationships within the preschool between staff and children are good and children are supported well, this means that they are confident to part from their parents and to try new activities and experiences.
- Staff have appropriate expectations of children's behaviour and use praise and encouragement of children to build on their self confidence and self esteem.
- An effective curriculum is in place with a wide range of planned activities which interest the children and sustain their efforts.
- Relationships with parents are good, this effectively supports the children's progress and attainment.

What needs to be improved?

- the structure of the day to ensure that group activities such as snack time, after lunch play, outside play and special activities enable children to gain the maximum benefit with regards to their learning and social skills and will give older children more opportunities to be independent
- the staff's knowledge of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and how children learn
- the planning to show clearly how more/less able children will be catered for and the records kept on children's development are evaluative with regards to children's achievements

What has improved since the last inspection?

The playgroup has made generally good progress in implementing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection for nursery education of 4 year olds.

Plans have been developed which are linked to the early learning goals and staff deployment is clearly indicated on the target activity plans. More time has been given in the programme for language and literacy for the use of phonics with the children and books with rhyming words have been introduced as part of the ongoing development.

Computers have been introduced for the use of all children to support information technology.

The introduction of home link books by the playgroup has provided daily information for the parents about their child's achievements.

The balance between adult lead and child initiated activities has only been partly addressed.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are confident and keen to be involved in activities provided. They are beginning to share fairly, to co-operate and to take turns. They are beginning to consider the consequences of their actions and their self esteem is promoted by the use of praise and encouragement by staff. Older children have some opportunities for independence but these are limited.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children listen to each other and adults and talk knowledgeably drawing on their own experiences. Older children are confident in recognising their names. Children are developing writing skills and are given opportunities to practise independent writing on a daily basis. They enjoy listening to well told stories and are able to predict what happens but children are not always able to see the book during snack time. time.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are learning to use numbers in a range of practical activities and have an understanding of addition and subtraction. They are given opportunities to practise their counting skills. They are learning to use comparative language such as big and little and to use language appropriate to quantity, shape, space and size. They have an understanding of the concept of weighing but limited opportunities to practise this in practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children take part in a range of activities, which enable them to learn through first hand experiences. They are learning about their world and the sequence of events in their lives. They have an understanding of their own culture and are learning about others. They have access to information technology, such as the computer and have opportunities to extend their technical knowledge using different construction mediums and tools.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children use a range of equipment both in and out of doors to develop their physical skills. They have opportunities to develop an increasing skill in moving, balancing, throwing and catching out of doors and to use and handle a range of tools including pencils with increasing control and precision. Spatial awareness is encouraged but during some activities space is cramped.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children express their ideas and feelings through a range of activities and in imaginative role play. They have opportunities to explore music and rhythm and to make their own music. Most children know their basic colours and have opportunities to use and explore different textures, different media and natural materials in their art and play activities. Opportunities are missed for older children to select their own materials, resources and tools when taking part in craft activities.	
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

- evaluate the structure of the day to ensure that group activities such as snack time, after lunch play, outside play and special activities allow children to gain the maximum benefit with regards to their learning and social skills and to give older children more opportunities to be independent
- continue to develop the staff's knowledge of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and how children learn
- ensure that the planning shows clearly how more/less able children will be catered for and that the records kept on children's development fully evaluate their achievements

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.