



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 155340

DfES Number: 585487

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 26/11/2004
Inspector Name Teresa Elkington

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care, Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Playmates Pre-School
Setting Address The Institute Hall
Crawley Road
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 4ET

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Playmates Pre School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Playmates Pre School
Address The Institute Hall
Crawley Road
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 4ET

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

Playmates Pre-School opened in 1988. It operates from a large room in a community hall, located in Horsham. The setting serves the local area.

There are currently 29 children from two to five years on roll. This includes funded three-year-olds and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens Monday to Friday term-time only. On Monday, Tuesday and Thursday sessions are from 09:15 until 12:15. On Wednesday and Friday sessions are from 09:15 until 14:45.

There are seven full and part-time staff working with the children. Two staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification, to enable the setting to meet the requirement of half the staff being qualified to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Playmates Pre-school provides good-quality nursery education overall, which enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Very good progress being made in three areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have an adequate knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. However, this knowledge is not used effectively when planning activities for the children. Planning does not clearly show what the children will learn and how activities will be adapted for children working at differing levels.

Staff show an understanding of the individual needs of the children. However, they do not provide sufficient challenge in creative activities, or extend mathematical concepts for some children. Staff set realistic boundaries and give praise and encouragement to promote good behaviour. The pre-school benefits from a wide range of good quality resources, which are well used to support children's learning.

The leadership and management is generally good. The supervisor and staff work well together, they all have the opportunity to share in the planning, observation and assessment within the pre-school. However, the planned activities are not sufficiently evaluated to provide staff with the information they need for future planning. The team receive support from regular staff meetings, ongoing training to develop their skills and effective systems for staff appraisals. The supervisor has a positive approach to the development of the pre-school and has formed positive links with their local Early Years Development Childcare Partnership, which is supported by the committee.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Formal and informal systems are in place for sharing information on children's progress. They receive information regarding activities through notice boards, newsletters. However, the prospectus lacks information on the educational programme.

What is being done well?

- Staff create a stimulating environment, where children learn through a range of practical activities. The good quality resources are used well to provide many learning experiences for the children.
- Children are given good opportunities to develop their physical skills, through the use of worthwhile and meaningful activities which children enjoy participating in.
- Children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing very well. Children have access to a range of books which encourages children in their handling of them and their participation at story times. Children are

confident speakers and show a good understanding that writing can be used for different purposes.

- The staff welcome parental involvement in their child's learning and provide worthwhile opportunities to share information.

What needs to be improved?

- the planning and evaluation of the education programme;
- the challenges set for children's differing levels of ability;
- the children's understanding of simple calculation;
- the information on the education programme.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good progress has been made on the areas highlighted at the previous inspection; develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, to enable them to plan activities across the six areas of learning; ensure that children's assessment records are used to inform planning and that the partnership with parents is developed to encourage the sharing of information; develop the opportunities for writing and word recognition.

Staff have attended training sessions on the foundation stage to help them develop their understanding of the early learning goals. Long, medium and short term plans are in place, however, staff do not clearly indicate the learning intention of activities and how they will be adapted for children's differing levels of ability. This is an area that has been identified as a key issue to be addressed at this inspection.

The pre-school have adopted the Local Authority developmental profiles to enable them to record how children are progressing through the early learning goals. This information is not always used well to plan for children's next steps in learning. Parents are encouraged to share information and monitor children's progress through the use of informal and formal consultations with staff.

Communication, language and literacy is a particular strength of the pre-school. Children are given many opportunities to practice their writing skills, both in activities and play situations. Resources are readily available to allow children to freely make marks on paper. The introduction of a letter of the week has encouraged children to recognise and associate the sounds and formations of letters.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident and work well independently, showing good levels of concentration in their chosen activities. Staff are establishing good methods to help children co-operate when working together in whole group situations. Staff have established friendly, positive relationships with the children and use praise and encouragement to promote their self-esteem. There are many opportunities for them to develop personal independence within the daily routine.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy looking at and exploring books and handle them appropriately. Children recognise their first names and some are beginning to write their name with well-formed letters. Children are given opportunities to make marks in everyday activities for example writing names on their work, writing lists and messages within the role play area. Children are confident speakers and are able to express their feelings and experiences in small and whole group situations.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are gaining confidence in counting beyond five, with the more able child counting beyond ten. They are able to represent numbers using their fingers and encouraged to recognise number formations and shape through planned activities. Children engage in a range of practical activities to encourage their concept of positional language. Insufficient opportunities are available to extend children's exploration of addition and subtraction within the planned programme and routine activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident in their design and making skills and have access to a range of construction activities, creative and malleable materials. However, staff do not always allow children to express their designing ideas freely. Children are skilful in their use of programmable equipment. They are encouraged to talk about past and present events in their lives. Children experience interesting range of topics to allow them to explore and investigate aspects of the natural and man made world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
------------	-----------

Children move with confidence and control and show good co-ordination skills. They are independent and have an awareness of personal hygiene. Children access a range of tools within the planned activities and many are confident in their use of brushes, scissors and pencils. Children enjoy using a good range of large play equipment which is used to enhance the children's developing skills in climbing and balancing.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children have opportunities to participate in a range of activities to stimulate their senses, for example, playing with play dough and noting the changes of colours when painting. Children use their imagination in many role play situations which is well supported by resources and staff interaction. Children are not provided with sufficient challenge when undertaking planned craft activities. Children enjoy participating in singing sessions and have built a good repertoire of songs and rhymes.

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

- ensure that effective teaching methods are used to enable children to i) participate in activities that are challenging for their individual stage of learning; ii) develop children's concept of simple calculation.
- develop the planning to include the six areas of learning to show; i) the learning intention of activities; ii) how activities will be adapted for children's differing levels of ability; iii) the evaluation of activities to provide the information required for future planning.
- improve the information given to parents regarding the educational programme provided.

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.