



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 101817

DfES Number: 545613

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	09/02/2004
Inspector Name	Angela Cole

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Little Pickles Playgroup
Setting Address	Early Years Centre Bradfords Lane Newent Gloucestershire GL18 1QT

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Little Pickles Playgroup 1062381
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Little Pickles Playgroup
Address	Early Years Centre Bradfords Lane Newent Gloucestershire GL18 1QT

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

Little Pickles Playgroup opened in 1999 as a committee-run group. It is located at the Early Years Centre in Bradfords Lane, Newent. The premises consist of a playroom, integral toilets and an enclosed, outside, patio area. The playgroup serves the local area. There are currently 54 children from two to under five years on roll. This includes 38 funded three-year-olds and 11 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Two children have special needs. No children speak English as an additional language. The playgroup opens each weekday during school term times except for Tuesday mornings and Friday afternoons during autumn, and possibly spring, terms. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30 and 12.30 until 15.00. Tuesday afternoons and Friday mornings are for the youngest children. Wednesdays are for pre-school children. Seven part-time staff work with the children. One has teacher status; one has level three and three have level two early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The playgroup has close associations with the adjacent Newent Opportunity Group and with the Glebe Infants School that many children later attend.

How good is the Day Care?

Pickles Playgroup provides satisfactory care for children. Staff are organised, well qualified and follow a full training programme. Documents and policies are regularly updated. Playgroup records are accessible and stored securely. A high number of adults care for the children, including keyworkers to settle and met the needs of individuals. The premises are purpose-built, clean, well maintained and welcoming. Good use is made of available space for different areas of play. A wide range of toys and equipment from child-height storage is set out each session, though toys do not show positive images of disability. There is insufficient equipment when all children go outside to play on wheeled vehicles.

Children are safe and staff often review safety arrangements. Families arrive and leave safely, and access to the playgroup is closely monitored. Staff have good knowledge of child protection. Effective hygiene routines are followed and children

are well cared for if they have an accident or become ill. However, parents are not asked to sign records of medicine given. Children's dietary needs are fully known. Many different nutritious foods are introduced, though non-healthy foods such as sweet biscuits are often provided. Drinking water is not obviously available, though children pour their own milk or water at snack time.

Stimulating activities help children make progress in all areas of development, though provision in some aspects of language, physical and creative play are limited. Staff closely observe children's progress. They respond to children's interests and use much encouragement to foster good behaviour, such as awarding 'happy' stickers. A high level of support is given to those with special needs.

The staff work hard to gain parents' confidence so they can meet the needs of children together. Much verbal information is shared, though parents are not actively given their child's records. Excellent information is written for helpers on the rota.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This is not applicable as there were no actions arising from the last inspection.

What is being done well?

- The premises are welcoming with a new, well-furnished entrance lined with up to date notices. The playroom walls are covered in bright displays of children's work and recent photographs of their activities.
- Children are highly involved in stimulating free play. Varied use is made of both indoor and outdoor areas. For example, children plant herbs, feed birds and go on an outdoor 'safari' with their backpacks.
- There are comprehensive policies for all relevant issues. These are regularly updated to support the work of the playgroup. Many are shared in the parent handbook.
- There are very good systems to make the premises secure and to keep children safe. Staff are vigilant at all times, especially as children arrive and are collected. Emergency practices are held regularly and recorded in detail. Risks and hazards are effectively identified before outings to ensure the children's safety.
- A high level of support is given to each child with special needs, including one to one help where needed. There are good facilities for disabled persons within the building. Staff liaise closely with parents and full use is made of help from other professionals.
- Children are well behaved as all staff follow appropriate strategies for managing behaviour. Positive methods are effectively encouraged, such as praise and full involvement in interesting, self-chosen activities.

What needs to be improved?

- the provision of some aspects of language, physical and creative development
- the provision of sufficient equipment for the number of children playing outdoors, and of a range of resources and activities showing positive images of disability
- the recording of medication given to children
- the availability of drinking water
- opportunities for parents to share children's development records

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
5	Ensure that sufficient equipment is available to meet the needs of the children playing outdoors.
7	Ensure the written record of medicines given to children is signed by parents.
8	Make sure that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times.
9	Ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice regarding disability.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have very good understanding of elgs and curriculum plans are clearly detailed with each level of stepping stones. There is careful updating of previous plans using daily written evaluation. Children's needs are well known by keyworkers, and progress is discussed and recorded daily in detailed assessment. Many good teaching methods for both three and four-year-olds are based on play and good interaction between adults and children. The timetable and wide range of activities are carefully planned with minimum disruption at changes of routine. However, some aspects of physical and creative development are not sufficiently resourced in practice. There are missed opportunities to challenge older children to extend language and writing skills and some children are not fully involved at circle time. Though much storage is at a low level, children do not choose their own activities in addition to those set out. The management of children and their behaviour is to be commended, and those with special needs receive very good support.

Leadership and management of staff are generally good. Leadership is very strong with clear aims, delegation of responsibilities, support for professional development and excellent strategies to form good team relationships. Though a few aspects of planning and practice have been missed, staff generally act effectively after daily monitoring of sessions and children's responses. All are highly committed to improving the playgroup and its provision.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Families have excellent opportunities to be informed about this parent-run group, to share what they know about their child and to be involved in the learning. Staff do not actively give children's records to parents though they write invitations to come and see them. Good feedback is given as children are collected.

What is being done well?

- Children settle confidently into the playgroup and concentrate for long periods on their chosen activities.
- Children are well supported to use speech to explore their feelings and imaginative ideas. They listen spellbound to stories and show keen interest in picture books. There are excellent opportunities for mark making, such as painting and drawing in sand.
- Children develop confident counting skills and solve complex mathematical problems in their play when making complicated constructions.
- Children have very good opportunities to explore and investigate a wide range of experiences, objects and materials in their immediate environment

and from the wider world. Their creative work in movement, art and design is fully valued and supported.

- There is excellent use of keyworkers to support individual children's learning. The daily discussion and assessment of each child's progress is highly successful in the planning of appropriate activities.
- Staff have created a wealth of opportunities for parents to be involved in the group and in their child's learning, including home-link activities such as Pickles Bear, activity sheets and the share-a-book scheme.

What needs to be improved?

- the organisation of the pre-school circle time to maximise children's participation and concentration
- support for older children to extend their speaking skills, for example, in 'show and tell' and 'home-playgroup bear' activities, and to extend their ability to use writing as a means of recording, for example, their names
- regular use of small and large physical equipment and free exploration of the different sounds of instruments
- opportunities for children to make their own choice of toys and equipment from the accessible storage
- parents' access to records about children's development and progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Staff have made very good progress in implementing the action plan developed in response to a point of consideration in the previous inspection. Staff have addressed the weakness in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world by reconsidering the planning of regular use of the technological equipment available. Children now show interest in a wide range of technology items, know how to operate them and interact with simple programs on the computer. The improvements made have had a positive impact on children's learning.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children settle quickly and form good relationships with adults. They are deeply interested in their play, choosing from toys set out but not from storage at their height. Children play well in small groups, sharing toys such as trains and taking turns to choose books to take home. During free play, they are well behaved at all times. However, older children are not fully engaged in some circle activities such as the 'show and tell'. Good self help skills are developed for hygiene and eating.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are fully supported to develop listening and talking skills during as individual and in small groups, though not in some whole group activities. They extend their use of words and use language to share their feelings. Children enjoy rhymes and books. They are fully involved in story sessions and in telling their own stories. There is a wealth of opportunities for mark making, including in an 'office', though opportunities are missed for older children to attempt to write their names.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children eagerly count, including backwards for a 'rocket' launch. They often use number in play and conversation, for example, about two zebras bought to playgroup. Children begin to recognise calendar numbers and know '4' on the birthday board. They say how many more snack cups are needed and confidently sing songs such as 'Five little robins'. Children learn of shape, pattern and size in topics on 'Bears' and 'Jungles', for example recognising binoculars makes a 'stripy' tiger look 'bigger'.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have very good opportunities to explore a wide range of objects and materials to note differences and changes, including water play and growing herbs. They enjoy designing, for example train tracks and bird houses, and choose their own tools, such as coloured tapes. They are keen to use attractive technology equipment such as a listening station and interactive computer programs. The local lake is explored, and topics including China and Africa increase children's sense of place.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children move confidently and imaginatively to variations in rhyme and music. They often recognise changes when they become hot or tired during physical play. They show particularly good control of wheeled vehicles outside. However, there are insufficient regular opportunities to develop skills with other large and small physical equipment. Good hand-eye co-ordination is shown with many small tools such as scissors, brushes and pencils, and children pour their own drinks with great care.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have good opportunities to explore colour as they mix their own paints. They experience a wide range of textures, for example, in sand and shaving foam. Children enthusiastically join in movement and action songs, though have few opportunities to play freely with musical instruments. There is excellent use of imagination in construction and role play, that are both well supported by adults. While on an outside 'safari' with soft toys, a fascinated child exclaimed, 'A snake bit me'!

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

- maximise older children's participation and concentration, particularly in circle time activities to develop speaking skills;
- support children to extend their use of writing as a means of recording, for example, their names;
- further extend planning to regularly provide small and large physical equipment and free exploring of different musical instrument sounds;
- increase opportunities for parents to be informed about their child's achievements and progress.

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.