



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 219912

DfES Number: 513007

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	06/10/2004
Inspector Name	Jan Clarke-Potter

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Happy Tots Playgroup
Setting Address	2-4 Blackfriars Rushden Northamptonshire NN10 9PQ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Colleen Walker
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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

The Happy Tots Playgroups registered in 1999 from the present premises in Blackfriars, Rushden. There are two groups operating at 2-4 Blackfriars and 10 Blackfriars, the premises are amongst converted shops. No 2-4 is registered to provide 25 places for children between the ages of two to five, and no 10 is registered to provide 12 places for children from two to five years, although children from two to three years generally attend this group which registered in 2001. The groups serve the local community.

There are currently 25 children on roll. This includes 17 funded three-year-olds. Children attend a variety of sessions. The group is able to support children who have special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term only. Sessions are from 09:00 until 11:30 and 12:30 to 15:00. One full-time and seven part-time staff work with the children. Five staff have appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are currently on training programmes. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

How good is the Day Care?

Happy Tots Playgroup provides satisfactory care for children. The operational plan works in practice, staff are well deployed and training needs are identified. The playgroup is clean, warm and welcoming. There is a satisfactory amount of toys including a wide variety of outdoor play equipment used in the outdoor area. Documentation is up-to-date and well organised with some minor exceptions.

There are effective safety and security systems in place. Health and safety procedures are understood by staff and fire evacuations are effective. Children learn about hygiene procedures through their routines, although their social skills and independence are not always encouraged during snack times.

The children benefit from the amount of attention and support provided by the staff. A range of colourful and attractive activities is set out although children are not always able to access the resources reflecting the wider world. Staff encourage the children, give clear guidelines and manage children's behaviour according to their age and stage of development.

Staff develop effective working relationships with parents. Comprehensive information on the notice boards and effective record keeping ensures that parents are kept informed about the provision. Parents are positive about the provision.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the group have secured fireguards around the heaters and areas are now made safe for children. Parents now give permission for medical emergency advice or treatment on the registration form prior to admission. Both improve the safety of children attending.

What is being done well?

- Staff appraisals identify training needs and staff keep up-to-date with regular in-house training.
- The Pre-school pays good attention to safety issues. Staff are aware of health and safety procedures and understand their responsibilities with fire evacuations, which are completed on a regular basis and recorded.
- Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues.
- Documentation is well organised, staff and parents are made aware of the comprehensive policies and procedures and these are regularly updated.

What needs to be improved?

- the documentation to ensure daily attendance records show times of arrival and departure of children and staff
- the organisation of snack time so that children's social skills and independence are appropriately fostered
- developing staff's knowledge in the area of equal opportunities and ensuring that available resources are used effectively to support children's learning
- documentation: devising a no smoking policy and written procedures for child protection to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer.

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
2	Ensure a daily attendance record is maintained for children and staff showing times of arrival and departure.
7	Devise a no smoking policy and make available to parents.
9	Ensure that children have access to an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
13	Include the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer in the child protection statement.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision at Happy Tots Playgroup is acceptable and children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are happy and enjoy taking part in activities and show a positive attitude to learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good, with some areas of weakness. Staff have a generally good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. Planning is generally good although learning intentions are not always clear and some areas of learning are not fully developed when planning the programme. Staff use a range of teaching skills to support children although they do not always extend children's learning. Resources are plentiful although these are not always used effectively to stimulate children's interest in learning. Adult led activities are clearly introduced and staff question the children to ensure they have understood. Staff reinforce clear boundaries and sensitively deal with any behaviour issues as they arise. They offer regular praise and encouragement, and children behave generally well. Observations and assessments enable staff to build up their knowledge of how individual children learn and this information is used to assist future planning. These, however, do not always link to the stepping stones or early learning goals.

Leadership and management at the playgroup is generally good. Staff discuss issues as a team. They are developing good working relationships, which ensures positive team working. Effective systems are in place to support and motivate staff and these identify training needs. Staff work closely with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership to ensure improvements are ongoing.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Staff and parents work well together to support the children. Parents are provided with leaflets about the foundation stage and early learning goals. Information is shared through regular discussions.

What is being done well?

- Staff know the children well and ensure that they give due emphasis to settling them in, they continue to offer good support as children form relationships and adapt to playgroup routines.
- Staff encourage children to develop their speaking and listening skills, and children communicate clearly with confidence.
- Staff enable children to develop social skills by encouraging them to work together with others in small groups. Children have regard for other children as they play and share ideas and equipment, and they begin to understand the need for simple rules.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to recognise simple words and to look at books for enjoyment
- planning to ensure that it links with the stepping stones, to ensure that learning intentions are clear and that no gaps in the range of activities covering the six areas of learning occur, and ensure that children are stimulated and challenged
- the attention given to increasing children's awareness of simple working technology
- effective use of available resources to support children's learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the staff were required to develop opportunities for children to be able to recognise and use a range of familiar words to be displayed around the room. Some progress has been made to address this issue, however, this is limited. This will be carried forward from this inspection and will form part of the key issue.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are excited and keen to join in with new activities. Most children work as a group, share, take turns and behave generally well. Some children have good levels of involvement and concentrate well for long periods, for example as they complete a complicated puzzle. Children's independence skills are developing and they begin to make choices and decisions. They are building trusting relationships with the staff and children are becoming confident with a positive attitude to learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are developing a good vocabulary and use newly acquired words well. They enjoy listening to stories as a group and begin to understand simple rhymes. Children do not often look at books for pleasure or look at simple words to promote their interest in reading. Some children are able to recognise their names, however, they do not often have opportunities to discuss letter sounds. Children develop their writing skills as they paint, draw and make appointments in the diary for the 'Vet'.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children show an interest in numbers and use them in their play, and some children can count to 10 and above. As they take part in number rhymes they learn about simple addition and subtraction. Children recognise shapes and use appropriate language to describe these; some begin to make patterns and to calculate as snack is given out. As they play with dough, cook, and work with sand and water children begin to use language to describe weight, size and capacity.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are curious, and successfully investigate and observe as they watch the small snail on the leaf. They begin to discuss significant events in their lives with others. Children construct with a purpose and develop design skills as they build roadways and towers. Children do not regularly use simple working technology to support their learning. As they visit the zoo and the theatre children learn about their own environment and begin to understand the wider world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children's physical skills are developing well and they are becoming confident as they use wheeled toys, the parachute and a selection of outdoor equipment. They move well, run, jump and stop and take part in ball games, and show an awareness of their own space. Children do not often take part in challenging new tasks to further develop their climbing and balancing skills. Children handle tools safely during cooking, craft and tasting activities. They begin to understand their own basic needs.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children's senses are well promoted as they squeeze limes, touch frozen vegetables and take part in cooking activities. They use their growing imagination well in the role-play area, as they act out being a 'Vet'. They begin to sing familiar songs and use musical instruments, and understand how sounds can be changed as they take part in planned activities. Children explore colour by mixing paints together, use collage materials with interest and learn a range of useful techniques.

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

- review planning of the educational programme to ensure that resources are used effectively to stimulate and challenge children; to ensure that learning intentions are clearly identified and that activities to cover all areas of communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development are 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.

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.