



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 509653

DfES Number: 515567

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 04/02/2005
Inspector Name Hazel Taylor

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St Michael's Playgroup
Setting Address Church House
Mount Pleasant
Louth
Lincolnshire
LN11 9DW

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of St Michael's Playgroup Committee

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Michael's Playgroup Committee
Address Church House
Mount Pleasant
Louth
Lincolnshire
LN11 9DW

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

St. Michael's Playgroup opened in 1986 and is run by a committee. It operates from one main room within St. Michael's Church House which is located near the centre of the market town of Louth. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup serves the immediate locality as well as surrounding villages.

A maximum of 18 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 29 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and all children speak English as their first language.

The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times. Monday to Thursday sessions are from 09:00 until 11:45 and 13:00 until 15:45. Friday sessions are from 09:00 until 11:45.

There are six staff who work with the children on both a full and part time basis. Half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 3. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The playgroup is affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St. Michael's Playgroup offers a very good quality educational programme in a friendly and stimulating environment. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. This is a result of the skilful methods staff use to engage children's interest and foster confidence in their ability to learn.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff work well as a team to provide a broad range of practical activities to help children learn. They organise the indoor and outdoor space and resources imaginatively to create an interesting learning environment in which children are motivated to learn. The outdoor area is used very well for promoting children's physical skills linked with maths and language skills, developing their imaginative play and their understanding of the natural world. Planning and assessment systems provide a suitable framework to help children make very good progress. Calm and positive management of children's behaviour helps children feel secure and settled and fosters their self-esteem. There is an effective system in place to provide good support for children who have special educational needs.

The leadership and management of the nursery very good. Effective leadership and a dedicated staff ensures that good early years practice is shared and areas for future development are identified. All staff are positively encouraged and supported to undertake further training to enhance their knowledge and understanding.

The partnership with parents is very good. There is a friendly atmosphere with opportunities for informal discussion with staff about children's progress. Parent's receive helpful information about the group and the educational programme.

What is being done well?

- The educational programme effectively promotes learning in all six areas. The staff work collaboratively to provide a wide range of authentic and engaging first-hand experiences which motivate children well and help them make very good progress.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good and a strength of the group. Children are happy, interested and able to work on their own. Children are becoming good communicators, they negotiate and use talk to organise their play with others, behaviour and relationships are good. Staff provide good role models and a harmonious learning environment in which children feel safe to explore new experiences.
- Children are developing a very good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Children enjoy a range of activities helping them to explore and investigate objects, materials and the natural world, and staff help them to extend their thinking by introducing new vocabulary and

encouraging use of books as sources of information. Children can confidently communicate details of past and present events in their own lives and those of other people they know. Good use is made of available technological resources to support children's learning.

- Staff consolidate and extend children's language, literacy and mathematical learning by giving them opportunities to practice their skills and knowledge in a variety of purposeful activities, well resourced role play situations and by linking activities effectively to physical play outdoors.
- Staff have a clear understanding of the importance of partnership with parents and this has a positive impact on children's development and learning. Parents receive good written information about the provision and the curriculum which is reinforced verbally on a regular basis. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's learning .

What needs to be improved?

- plans which continue to identify how activities can be consistently and systematically adapted to ensure that children of all abilities are able to gain the most from the activity and the learning materials, and are assured of optimum progression in their learning.

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What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the playgroup agreed to provide more variety when introducing children to their own written name and use repeat sound patterns more frequently to build up their knowledge and confidence of rhythm in language. They were also asked to review the procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of different teaching methods and ensure they are used to improve the quality of teaching overall.

The playgroup has made very good progress since the last inspection and many older children are able to recognise their own name card during daily self-registration and snack time as well as during writing activities. Children are also given good opportunities to link sounds to letters and respond to sound patterns and rhythms within simple word sequences as they enjoy story and singing sessions.

Discussion with staff and consideration of documents indicates that planning and monitoring systems are reviewed regularly. As a consequence, more effective teaching methods have been developed and continue to be refined in the light of training opportunities.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children's behaviour is good and they learn to concentrate and persevere with tasks. Children are confident, expressing their needs and taking the initiative in a variety of situations. They relate well to each other and approach adults with confidence. Children are motivated to learn and select activities and resources independently. Through topic work and discussion they are developing awareness of self and others of different cultures and beliefs.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are developing a wide vocabulary and are confident in their use of language to organise their play and speak coherently in front of others. Children are learning the conventions of reading and respond enthusiastically to stories. More able children can link sounds to letters and are beginning to recognise sound patterns in language. Children are beginning to write or trace their own name independently and have opportunities to attempt writing for different purposes in role play.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children can count in sequence to ten. More able children are developing their awareness of larger numbers and can recognise and write some numerals. Children use number names and mathematical vocabulary spontaneously in everyday situations such as role play, singing, snack time and during outdoor play. Good one to one activities are used to develop children's understanding of addition and subtraction. Children use language well to compare shape, position and size.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn about the natural world and living things and have the opportunity to explore the environment and use their senses to describe materials. They talk about past and present experiences in their own lives and learn about the lives of others, including those from other cultures. They are encouraged to construct with a purpose in mind and using a variety of natural and man-made resources. Good use is made of available technology to support children's learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children's small hand skills and whole body movements are developed through effective use of a wide range of equipment and large apparatus both indoors and outdoors. They have opportunities to practice a range of skills, including balancing and climbing, and use large apparatus with confidence and co-ordination. They are developing good spatial awareness. Children are developing an understanding that good practices, with regard to eating, hygiene and exercise, can lead to good health.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children respond well to the imaginative role play opportunities which are linked to themes. They are also able to make good use of resources independently to develop their own imaginative creativity. Children explore colour, texture and shape through a variety of play materials and are able to use resources to express their ideas and communicate their feelings. Children enjoy playing musical instruments and are able to express themselves creatively through a variety of musical activities.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to the following:
- continue to embed and develop the new systems for planning to ensure that they identify how activities can be consistently and systematically adapted to ensure that children of all abilities are able to gain the most from the activity and the learning materials, and are assured of optimum progression in their learning. Continue to monitor the effectiveness of this in practice.

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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.