



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 141769

DfES Number: 517425

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 04/03/2004
Inspector Name Patricia Joan Latham

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Emerson Valley Playgroup
Setting Address 6 White Horse Drive
Emerson Valley
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK4 2AS

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Emerson Valley Playgroup 1056708

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Emerson Valley Playgroup
Address 6 White Horse Drive
Emerson Valley
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK4 2AS

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

Emerson Valley Playgroup has been registered since 1984 and is sited in the Community Hall on Emerson Valley, Milton Keynes. It is a parent committee managed group and children who attend are from the local community.

The playgroup opens for five days a week during school term times during the following times: Monday 09.30 until 12.00 and 12.30 until 15.00; Tuesday 09.30 until 12.00; Wednesday and Thursday 09.30 until 15.30 and Friday 12.30 until 15.00.

There are currently 58 children on roll. This includes 27 funded 3 year olds and 19 funded 4 year olds. Currently no children attend with special needs or who speak English as an additional language.

The committee employ 11 members of staff who either have relevant qualifications or are undergoing training at present. Staffing includes an office administrator and a designated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Emerson Valley Playgroup is of good quality. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. They are making very good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development and generally good progress in all other areas.

Quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a good knowledge of early learning goals and the curriculum is planned to cover all areas of learning. Activities are linked into interesting topics and learning, encouraged through free play. Staff challenge and question children effectively encouraging them to think and develop language skills. They know each child well and ensure individual support is given when needed. Behaviour is managed well and children are developing good codes of conduct. Staff use time and resources to reinforce learning across several areas at once although there are some aspects of mathematics and literacy which are not consistently covered. Regular observations are made on children's learning which inform planning. Recordings are not linked into the Foundation Stage stepping stones and, as some staff are also uncertain about these stages, it is not easy to identify children's ongoing progress or individual needs.

Leadership and management is generally good and staff work as a team having clear roles. All staff take part in planning, are committed to training and set clear learning aims for activities. Not all large group activities are managed well enough to develop children's concentration or confidence and although individual activities are evaluated there is no evaluation of the overall programme offered. This results in some aspects of learning being overlooked and not all children getting a balanced programme.

Partnership with parents is very good. They are encouraged to take part in children's learning, have access to children's work and are able to regularly discuss issues with key workers.

What is being done well?

- Staff plan individual activities to include learning opportunities across several areas. During role play in 'MacDonald's' children count money, write orders, learn to queue for food and read from a menu.
- Children's language is encouraged at every opportunity. Staff question them well and children are able to communicate their ideas and feelings freely.
- Children are eager to learn and can freely choose from a large range of activities which are linked into interesting topics. They practise dragon dancing and make Chinese lanterns whilst learning about Chinese New year.
- Children are offered many differing ways of expressing themselves creatively whilst practising other skills. They make a volcano from junk then experiment

with bicarbonate of soda to make it erupt, and reproduce a plate picture of themselves when following a topic on 'My body'.

- Staff manage children's behaviour well and through set routines encourage them to develop good codes of conduct. Children know they must help tidy up, wash their hands before eating and line up before going out.

What needs to be improved?

- inclusion of more focused activities for more able children to practise mathematical skills, especially shape and pattern recognition, along with regular use of resources to support learning
- inclusion of more planned activities for phonetic work for all children and focused activities for more able children to practise letter formation and reading and writing of own name.
- better assessment of the programme offered to assess how activities can be effectively managed to encourage children to develop confidence and concentration when working in larger groups.
- recording of observations of children linking them into the Foundation Stage stepping stones to enable progress to be easily identified.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The playgroup has made been generally good progress since the last inspection. Staff provide practical activities linked into a range of interesting themes. Plans indicate clearly how staff can support differing learning needs and children are encouraged to think and question. There are opportunities for children to gain skills in problem solving and to record their findings, although there are still some areas of mathematics and literacy in which children have limited opportunity to develop or practise skills. Parents are encouraged to support children's learning and have access to children's progress records although these are not clear as to what stage children have attained.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are motivated and enjoy their learning. They work well together, sharing resources and understand there is a need to have group rules. Children are developing personal independence and demonstrate their own preference for things, choosing their own activities and when to eat their snack. In larger group activities they do not demonstrate such confidence or concentration skills.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are encouraged to use language to communicate their ideas and feelings and are developing a wide vocabulary. They enjoy listening to and reading a range of books and retell favourite stories. Children practise making marks during role play and are beginning to recognise their own names. There are few planned activities for all children to practise the sound and shape of letters or for more able children to learn and practise the correct formation of letters and familiar words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

All children are becoming familiar with numbers through free play activities. They are developing skills in calculation, adding together the number of items bought at 'MacDonald's' and recording the type of cars used by their families. They are increasing their mathematical vocabulary and talking about shape and measurement using play dough and construction toys. There are few focused activities for more able children to develop mathematical skills, especially in shape and pattern recognition.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are gaining an increasing understanding of the world around them. They examine and investigate everyday things such as their own homes and environment as well as the wider world. They grow sunflowers and learn about animals and the seasons. Children learn about their own and differing cultures and talk about past and present events in their lives. They are encouraged to design and build using their imagination, making spider bracelets, chinese lanterns and sewing placemats.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

All children are gaining a greater control over their bodies and are able to move around with growing awareness of things and others around them. They are able to use a range of equipment with a degree of safety, using the outside play equipment such as the large plastic bus and various ride on toys. They use smaller equipment, such as scissors and pencils, with increasing control and are becoming aware of how their bodies work and learning ways of keeping healthy.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children express themselves creatively using a variety of differing mediums. They use clay, dough, paint and do collage with a variety of materials. They use their imagination to communicate ideas and feelings through role play, creative design, song and dance, practising dragon dancing and playing musical instruments. Through various activities they use and develop their senses, smelling and tasting differing foods and listening to sounds.

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

- extend present assessment of the provision to ensure activities are managed well to maximise learning opportunities and that all aspects of learning are covered especially in mathematics, communication, language and literacy.
- ensure that the observation records are linked into the Foundation Stage stepping stones in order that children's progress and learning needs can be easily identified.

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.