



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY245626

DfES Number: 519294

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 15/03/2005
Inspector Name Susan Christine McGuire

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Playtimes Playgroup
Setting Address Ferriman Road
Spaldwick
Cams
PE28 OTQ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Playtimes Playgroup 1032297

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Playtimes Playgroup
Address Ferriman Road
Spaldwick
Cams
PE28 OTQ

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

Playtimes Playgroup is an established playgroup which moved to these premises in 2002. It has a new purpose built building with a large playroom and adjacent outdoor play area. It is located in the village of Spaldwick. Children attend from Spaldwick and surrounding villages.

There are currently 29 children from 2 years 6 months to school age attend the group. This includes 22 funded 3 and 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during term time. Sessions are from 9am to 11:30am The group also have a lunch club which operates from 11:30 to 12:45.

Four part-time/full-time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3.

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 Playtimes Playgroup is good. It enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, and very good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff create a welcoming, stimulating yet relaxed environment where children feel supported and are confident to try. They know the children well through thorough assessment, which is used effectively to pitch activities at appropriate levels to meet individual needs. In practice, staff show a good understanding of the Foundation Stage, however this is not demonstrated in written plans which do not always refer to the areas of learning, or show links between identified learning intentions and the activities provided to support them.

Leadership and management is generally good. Staff work well as a team and have a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities within sessions. They have staff appraisals and regular contact with the management committee, who are developing an effective system for handover to new members to provide consistency in the setting for children. A good liaison with the local school is maintained. The committee has a limited understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, however, which prevents them from giving sufficient support to staff in preparing effective planning.

Partnership with parents is very good. They speak highly of the setting and appreciate the information they receive about their child's day through the day-books completed by staff. They are provided with good written information about the Foundation Stage and have frequent opportunities to be partners in their child's learning e.g. by taking 'Harold the Giraffe' home and a book-sharing scheme. Staff and parents are able to share information about the children's progress both informally and during some parents' evenings.

What is being done well?

- Staff skilfully provide a stimulating, well-organised learning environment into which are warmly welcomed. Children respond positively to this, showing confidence to try to new experiences, secure in the knowledge that they will be supported by staff in their attempts.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. They are confident, independent learners who are also beginning to share and take turns patiently and to consider the feelings of others. Some children also notice when others need help, e.g. with dressing-up clothes fastenings, and are quick to offer assistance.
- Staff provide daily opportunities for children to explore a range of musical

styles as a means of expressing themselves through movement and dance, e.g. world music and jazz. Musical instruments are also readily accessible for children to contribute to the sounds and to match rhythms.

- Children have substantial encouragement to develop creative skills. They have daily opportunities to design, construct and paint, with staff on hand to support and extend without imposing their own ideas on how the end result will look. Children's self-esteem in this regard is fostered by good display of their art work.
- Staff are effectively helping children to develop a good understanding of how their body works and what it needs to remain healthy. Children are following good routines for managing their personal hygiene, are reminded to drink when thirsty, and encouraged to notice changes in their body after exercise or when hungry, e.g. breathlessness and a rumbling tummy.

What needs to be improved?

- reference to the areas of learning in long-term plans
- the clarity of links between learning intentions and activities in weekly planning
- the management-committee's understanding of certain aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum
- provision for children to be able to spontaneously use their natural curiosity.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made in response to the points for consideration raised at the last inspection.

Staff have significantly improved the programme for communication, language and literacy by including opportunities for children to hear initial letter sounds and recognise words with matching initials, e.g. by introducing the Jolly Phonics system in conjunction with the local reception class, and by providing pictures on name-cards of objects with the same initial letter as the child's name. They also ensure that children are presented with a consistent style of print in labelling around the room to help their emergent writing skills.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children enter the setting with enthusiasm and settle quickly. They are confident and independence in their self-care, and in their selection of resources to support a chosen activity. They show persistence with challenging tasks e.g. manipulating clothes fastenings, and are helpful and considerate to others when turn-taking and sharing equipment. Staff foster positive behaviour with consistent praise and children will express feelings openly, understanding right from wrong.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are using language well to describe real and imagined events and to negotiate in play. Staff recognise opportunities to introduce new vocabulary e.g. 'nocturnal' and 'hamper' and encourage children's listening skills so they are beginning to hear initial letter-sounds. Children enjoy stories and access the well-presented book area freely. Staff provide a wide variety of mark-making experiences and children are beginning to form recognisable letters using good pencil-control.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children can name shapes, colours and numerals accurately. They count forwards confidently and some use is made of the everyday routine to encourage mathematical thought e.g. counting children at registration and deciding how many children are needed at snack tables, however other regular opportunities are missed to encourage problem-solving. Planned activities give children experiences of weighing, measuring, sorting and observing patterns and appropriate comparative language is introduced.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have a good sense of time through the daily observation of the date and weather, and are developing a sense of community from visitors and families who are invited to share aspects of their culture and the nature of their jobs with the children. Staff foster design and construction skills and encourage children to observe change in cooking and seed-growing activities. Learning is supported by I.T., but children have limited access to resources which encourage exploration and discovery.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Staff encourage children to be aware of, and respond appropriately to, the needs of their bodies e.g. drinking when thirsty. The outdoor play area is used well to develop skills in running, pedalling, steering and balancing and children move well to music. Children show an increasing awareness of personal space needed and are using a variety of tools skilfully to effect change. They can manipulate fastenings, pour accurately, and transport objects safely and with control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Staff provide a wide range of media and materials for children to explore freely and they encourage use of all senses in this e.g. describing how things feel. They support freely chosen art and craft activities well, extending children's own ideas and displaying the results thoughtfully. A wide variety of musical styles are enjoyed by children who spontaneously devise dances as a means of expression. Children's imagination is further developed through the well-resourced role-play area.

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

- further develop planning so that the six areas of learning are represented in long-term plans and that clear links are shown between identified learning intentions and the activities provided to support these
- extend the programme for knowledge and understanding of the world to include further opportunities for children to explore and investigate, using accessible and appropriate resources
- improve the management committee's understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to enable them to fully support staff in preparing effective planning.

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.