



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127276

DfES Number: 512365

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	07/10/2004
Inspector Name	Mary Van De Peer

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Invicta Park Playgroup
Setting Address	The Craig Centre Invicta Park Barracks Maidstone Kent ME14 2NA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Invicta Park Playgroup
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Invicta Park Playgroup
Address	Craig Centre, Invicta Park Barracks MAIDSTONE KENT ME14 2NS

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

Invicta Park Playgroup opened in 1994 and operates from two rooms in an army barracks community building. It is situated on an army barracks site in Maidstone, Kent. A maximum of thirty children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:30 to 12:15, term times only. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently twenty-two children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, thirteen children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the army quarters on site. The playgroup currently supports one child with special educational needs and also a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs four staff. The manager holds an appropriate early years qualification and one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

How good is the Day Care?

Invicta Park Playgroup provides good quality care for children. The environment is welcoming to both children and their parents.

Although there is currently a lack of qualified staff working with the children, the manager working with the children is committed to providing a safe and stimulating place for children to develop and play in. The procedures for appointing new staff would benefit from a review. The space, staff and resources are generally well organised to meet the children's needs effectively. Generally the required record keeping is in place, however the attendance register does not show children's arrival and departure times clearly. There are written policies and procedures available for both staff and parents, however some of these are out of date and require reviewing.

The playgroup has a good range of toys, resources and equipment, which are suitable to children's ages and development. The staff are always open to trying new

and different ways to encourage the children to make progress and have fun in their play. However, there are ways which can be looked at to improve children's choices. Children's behaviour is very good and they are aware of the boundaries set by staff. There are many children with English as a second language and some with special needs. Staff identify and meet their needs very well.

The playgroup's partnership with parents and carers is very good. The keyworker scheme seems to be effective. There is a contact book for each child which helps keep the communication line with parents open. There is also good verbal contact with parents, regarding general information about the playgroup. However, written policies and procedures require updating.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- The group ensures the required paperwork is kept updated and well maintained and shared with parents. A contact book for each child enables children to receive continuity of care.
- The group has a good range of toys, equipment and resources. These are used to plan appropriate and exciting activities to help promote the children's development. Other cultures and languages are explored with all the children. A 'Write Dance' programme helps children mark-make and recognise simple words in a fun way.
- The group ensures the premises are safe and secure for children. The children practice emergency evacuation procedures regularly.
- The staff use positive and fun strategies to manage the children's behaviour effectively. Methods are well thought out to ensure children's individual needs are met. Children feel secure and play within clear boundaries.
- The group makes good use of the outdoor play area. The children get plenty of fresh air.
- The children respond well to the staff's clear guidance and praise. They take part in planned activities, help tidy toys and are well behaved.
- The group offers a warm and welcoming environment to both children and their parents. Children feel safe and secure.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

Standard 3 Children are developing fine and gross motor skills using the 'Write Dance' programme. Music played at certain times during the session encourages the development of pre-writing and writing skills in children. This especially helps children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

What needs to be improved?

- the procedure for appointing new staff
- the ratio of qualified staff, including the appointment of an appropriately qualified deputy
- the information in policies and procedures.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

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
1	Review procedure for appointing new staff.
2	Continue to aim for at least 50% of staff to be qualified.
2	Provide an effective procedure for deputising.
14	Review and up date the playgroup's policies and procedures.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Invicta Park Playgroup provision is acceptable and of good quality overall. The children are making generally good progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

Teaching is generally good. The manager shows a secure knowledge of how children learn and the Early Learning Goals. This is passed on to other staff who provide the children with good role models and are committed to their learning and progress. Staff work with children closely, especially with children who have English as an additional language. They provide children with a wide selection of activities, toys and equipment to meet their needs. Staff observe and record an evaluation of these. There is scope for children to have more choices in their play. There are effective procedures to support children with special educational needs. The use of the 'Write Dance' programme is enabling all children to develop very good skills in mark-making.

Leadership and management is generally good. The committee are supportive towards all the staff. However, a better understanding of the Foundation Stage may benefit the provision and the opportunities available to children. The manager has worked hard to ensure the playgroup is committed to providing a stimulating environment for children to learn in. Additional qualified staff are needed to further improve the quality of care and education.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. There are written policies and procedures for parents to refer to, however these need updating. Notice boards help keep parents informed of what is happening in the group. Parents feel they are able to talk to their child's key worker at any time. A contact book also helps keep parent informed about their children's progress.

What is being done well?

- Children are able to communicate appropriately with adults and their peers. This is enabling them to develop positive and effective social skills.
- Children's mark-making skills are developing well. They are able to create their own designs using a variety of tools and resources.
- Adults use the 'Write Dance' programme effectively. This is encouraging children to mark- make in a fun way. Many children are able to write their own name competently.
- Adults manage children's behaviour well. Children are able to respond appropriately to adult guidance, learning through play within agreed boundaries.
- Children are learning about their own community and cultures and those of

other people. They are developing an awareness and understanding of the needs of others.

- The manager has a very good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and the Early Learning Goals. She and her staff are committed to the learning and development of children.
- There is a very good partnership with parents and carers. The effective key worker system keeps parents informed of their children's progress.

What needs to be improved?

- the opportunities for children to self-select
- the planning system so that children's next steps can be identified.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Observations made on children are dated. The contact book is used appropriately in informing parents of how their children are developing and progressing towards the Early Learning Goals.

Children are able to develop large motors skills and improve their agility with suitable equipment, both indoors and outdoors.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children's behaviour is good. They relate and communicate well together. Children are developing their social and interaction skills appropriately. Children don't always have choices in their play and some activities are too adult directed.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children communicate very well with each other. They are able to recognise and are beginning to write their names. The book area is well used by children. There is a very good range of mark-making resources. The 'Write Dance' programme is used well by staff to encourage children to move and mark-make in a fun way. There are good opportunities for children to link sounds to letters and objects. There are some missed opportunities for children to talk about what they are doing in some activities.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children can count well. They are beginning to learn about size and quantity using appropriate resources. Children are able to create patterns using different shapes and colours. There are some missed opportunities for children to learn simple problem-solving skills. More able children are not always able to extend their learning in using and comparing numbers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children can learn about other cultures, especially those of the people around them. They are developing their skills using communication and information technology. Children have the opportunity to explore their own community. They are comfortable with talking about their families, where they are and what they are doing.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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The use of the 'Write Dance' programme encourages the development of children's fine motor skills. They are able to use an outside play area regularly. Children show a good awareness of space. They are able to develop skills in using small and large tools and equipment. There are some missed opportunities for children to learn more about what is good for their bodies.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children are able to experience and explore a wide variety of materials, textures and resources. They are able to develop their creative skills using a range of mark-making and messy play resources. Positive role-play encourages the children to use their imagination and re-enact everyday situations and events. There are some missed opportunities for children to explain and talk about what they are doing and feeling.	

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

- Key Issues:
- Further develop the opportunities for children to self-select.
- Continue to develop the planning system so that children's next steps can be 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.

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.