



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 319310

DfES Number: 535655

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 28/02/2005
Inspector Name Karen Ling

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St. Johns Playgroup
Setting Address Kingston Park Avenue
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 2HB

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of The Trustees of St. Johns Playgroup
1069494

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name The Trustees of St. Johns Playgroup
Address Kingston Park Avenue
Newcastle upon Tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE3 2HB

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

St John's Playgroup was first registered in 1992. The playgroup is located within the Kingston Park housing estate, on the outskirts of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It is managed by the Trustee Officials of the Church together with two parent representatives. The playgroup operates from St John's Church building. Children who attend come from the locality and surrounding areas. Their social, cultural and religious backgrounds are mostly similar and reflect these areas.

St John's Playgroup is currently registered to care for a maximum of 24 children aged from two to five. There are currently 48 children on roll. This includes 22 three-year-olds, of whom 17 are in receipt of funding. None of the children have been identified as having special educational needs. Staff are experienced at working with and currently support children who are learning English as an additional language (EAL). There are four morning sessions from Monday to Thursday during school term times, starting at 09.30 and finishing at 12.00.

St John's Playgroup has a total of four permanent part-time members of staff. This includes three staff who hold recognised qualifications in childcare and education. The fourth member of staff is currently working towards a recognised qualification. The playgroup also receives qualified teacher support through the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The staff are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

How good is the Day Care?

St John's Playgroup provides good quality care for children. Staff are very friendly and have formed a good rapport with the children who clearly trust them. As a result, children settle very easily into the session and are happy within the group. The safety of children is given high regard by staff and they encourage good hygiene routines and promote the well being of children in their care. Children receive snacks each session, though staff do not plan variety or ensure healthy eating is encouraged. Staff's management of children is good. They use positive strategies to promote appropriate behaviour and give lots of praise and encouragement to

children which builds their self-esteem and confidence. The operational plan works well in practice. Not all documentation is completely accurate in content and the special needs policy does not yet have regard for all current legislation.

Staff are very dedicated and know their roles and responsibilities well and the needs of the children. Consequently, sessions run smoothly with staff consistently giving appropriate support to children as required. The playgroup is well resourced overall, though resources which support children with EAL are limited. Staff plan a wide range of activities which support all aspects of children's development. Children show interest in learning as they engage in activities and persevere to complete tasks. They are able to access equipment independently and use their imagination well as they take part in role play games.

Staff have developed a good rapport with parents and carers. Parents support the group well and each session is attended by a parent helper. Staff provide information in a variety of ways and the informal daily exchange helps to keep parents informed about their child. Systems are in place to maintain confidentiality.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the setting was asked to review the lock system in the bathroom area used by children. This has been amended satisfactorily. The setting was also asked to review the policy for Special Needs so that it has regard for current legislation. The policy has been reviewed, however it does not yet make reference to all current legislation.

What is being done well?

- Staff provide a wide variety of stimulating activities appropriate to the ages and stages of development of children attending the group.
- Staff form very good relationships with the children which helps them to settle and feel happy within the group.
- Staff work well together as a team. They are committed to ongoing professional development and the continuous improvement of the provision.
- A good rapport exists with parents who support the group well.

What needs to be improved?

- snacks provided for children so that they are healthy and nutritious
- resources which support children with English as an additional language
- documentation so that it is accurate, contains all necessary information and is in line with current legislation.

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
8	Provide healthy and nutritious food at snack times.
9	Develop resources to support children with English as an additional language.
14	Review documentation including policies and procedures to ensure all information is accurate, contains the necessary information and is in line with current legislation.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St John's Playgroup provides good quality nursery education where children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff know how young children learn best and have a sound knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones. They plan an appropriate balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities across all six areas of learning and children are able to access each activity and supporting resources independently. Learning intentions are clear overall and staff build on children's knowledge and understanding. Staff have a good rapport with children. They ask questions to help them think and give clear explanations to increase knowledge and understanding. They manage children well and behaviour is good. Staff do not always ensure that time and groupings are planned effectively to make the most of learning opportunities, such as snack times and story sessions. As a result opportunities to extend children's language skills and challenge children further are missed. Staff make observations of children and record what they can do. However, records do not give a clear picture to staff and parents of children's progress in relation to the stepping stones and early learning goals.

Leadership and management are generally good. Staff work effectively together as a team and know their roles and responsibilities well. They are committed to the continued improvement of the provision. Systems which monitor the quality of teaching and learning are not yet sufficiently rigorous.

Partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents support the group well and enjoy being involved with sessions. They receive regular verbal information about what is going on within the group, however they are not sufficiently informed about children's progress in relation to the stepping stones.

What is being done well?

- Personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the group. Children are very happy and staff help to build their confidence and self-esteem well.
- Children have lots of well planned opportunities to take part in role play and use their imagination.
- Staff have formed caring relationships with children; they value their contributions and interact effectively to support development.
- Children enjoy a range of stimulating activities; they are keen to learn and show good levels of concentration and perseverance.
- The team of staff work well together; they know their roles and responsibilities well which helps sessions to run smoothly.

What needs to be improved?

- the assessment system so that it clearly shows progress over time in relation to the stepping stones
- the grouping of children at story time so that all children receive appropriate challenge and opportunities to interact
- the extension of activities to encourage the more able children to use numbers to solve simple mathematical problems
- the planning of snack time to encourage children's independence and promote opportunities for children to engage in conversation.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The group has made very good progress in addressing the three key issues which followed the last inspection.

A writing table with a variety of writing tools is made available at each session and children are also encouraged to mark make during other activities, such as role play. As a result they regularly practise writing for a variety of reasons and practise linking letters and sounds.

Children also develop a good awareness of aspects of different cultures and their own community during their time at the playgroup because staff plan a variety of related activities.

The good range of physical equipment and resources are used regularly by children, enabling them to practise and develop their physical skills.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are happy within the group. They separate well from carers and settle quickly into the activities on offer. They persevere and concentrate well as they complete puzzles and show initiative as they select equipment. Children get on well with their peers and have formed good relationships with adults and clearly trust them. Children are not sufficiently encouraged to be independent at snack times or use the social occasion to share experiences.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children enjoy listening to stories and looking at books independently which they handle carefully. They recognise their own name and show interest in illustrations and print. They use one handed tools and equipment such as pencils and crayons with increasing skill and make attempts to write for different purposes. Activities where children can talk activities through and reflect on what they are doing are not always well planned and as a result children are not sufficiently challenged.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children regularly count in routine activities and some children count accurately beyond ten. They use positional language during play situations, for example as they talk about dolls going 'up' and 'down' the stairs. They recognise some shapes and can order by size. They have particularly enjoyed sorting 'biggest, middle size and smallest' in the story of the three bears. More able children are not sufficiently challenged to build on existing knowledge and solve simple mathematical problems.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children show an interest in why things happen and how things work. They enjoy using a range of construction equipment and materials to build, for example a large dragon's head during their Chinese new year celebrations. They observe similarities and differences and know the routine of the day well which helps them develop a sense of time passing. Children are not sufficiently encouraged to talk about significant things that they have done or personal events.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children engage in a range of fun activities which help them use skills, such as balancing, climbing, crawling and running. However, sufficiently challenging activity is not consistently on offer to children. They use tools, such as scissors and brushes with increasing skill and dexterity. They practise healthy routines such as washing hands before eating and after visiting the bathroom, however healthy eating is not promoted well within the group.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children frequently draw, paint and use a range of materials to create in two and three dimension. They use their imagination well and take part in a range of role play situations. They have recently enjoyed dressing up and acting out the story of 'Goldilocks and the three bears'. They are also very good at making up their own stories. Children enjoy singing and show interest in using musical instruments to accompany songs.	

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

- improve the assessment system so that it clearly shows staff and parents children's progress over time in relation to the stepping stones and early learning goals
- review the grouping of children for story time sessions so that the activity enables all children to listen and interact well
- challenge children, particularly the more able, to use number to calculate and to solve simple mathematical problems
- review the planning of snack time, so that children's independence and conversation skills are promoted effectively.

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.