



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127606

DfES Number: 520221

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 02/11/2004
Inspector Name Susan Jennifer Scott

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St Marys Playgroup
Setting Address Orchard Place
Faversham
Kent
ME13 8AP

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of The committee of St Marys Playgroup

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name The committee of St Marys Playgroup
Address Orchard Place
Faversham
Kent
ME13 8AP

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 Mary's Playgroup opened in 1985.

They operate from a detached porta-cabin on the grounds of St Mary's of Chantry primary school, in the town of Faversham, Kent. There are 3 rooms that the children use for work and play, toilets and a designated kitchen area. A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any one time.

The playgroup is open each weekday, during term time only. The group offers the following sessions: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 09.00 - 11.30 and Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday from 12.30 - 15.00. From January they open Wednesday afternoon for their rising 5's group. They operate a Parent & Toddler group on a Tuesday morning from 09.00 - 11.15. The playgroup have access to an outside play area which is closely supervised and secure within the grounds of the school.

The playgroup serves the people of the local area and surrounding towns. There are currently 78 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 38 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with special educational needs.

The playgroup employs ten staff. Seven of the staff, including three of the supervisors, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The group receive support from the Early Years Advisory Teacher, and they also liaise with the teachers at the adjacent primary school.

The playgroup is a committee managed group which is constituted with the PLA. There are three supervisory staff who work collectively to manage the playgroup; however they are ultimately overseen by the management committee.

How good is the Day Care?

St Mary's Playgroup provides good care for children.

The playgroup have exclusive use of the premises and a variety of appropriate equipment is provided for the children to use. The staff team work well together and share responsibilities for delivering a variety of activities for the children. All staff have completed up date First Aid training and two of the staff are currently studying to qualify to level two. All staff are aware of the written procedures and policies and carry these out as part of their responsibilities. The documentation needs one adjustment to meet the requirements.

The premises are clean, safe and attractive with good access to outdoor play space. There is good security inside and staff pay good attention to safety. Routines for hygiene are good and provision for food and drink is appropriate although this needs to be extended so that children experience a choice of snack, as described in the policy, and good access to water to drink.

The staff are flexible and positive in managing children's behaviour and meeting their individual needs, however, they are researching their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act and under Child Protection procedures. There is a clear commitment to, and support for children with additional or special needs and there are good procedures to enable them to support programmes for individual development.

The relationship between parents and staff is good: parents are very satisfied and feel their children make good progress. They receive a variety of verbal and written information and are informed of events taking place in the group. They can access a variety of information provided by the group and they can consult their children's records during the sessions upon request.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable

What is being done well?

- The environment is attractive and well organised, with a good variety of toys and play equipment for children to access freely.
- The staff have a good understanding of safety issues; procedures are clear and understood by all staff ensures children are supervised and not exposed to hazards indoors or outside.
- There are clear and consistent routines to maintain hygiene and good records are kept.
- Staff have a good understanding of individual needs and provide a supportive service which uses good procedures to enable children to develop and make progress.

What needs to be improved?

- the retention of registration records
- the promotion of choice and independence regarding food and drink
- the information on Disability legislation
- the staff's knowledge and understanding of Child Protection issues.

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.)

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received no complaints about this provider

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 |
|-----|---|
| 2 | Retain the record of attendance times for a minimum period of two years. |
| 8 | Ensure that access to food and drink reflects policy and promotes independence and choice for children. |
| 10 | Obtain information on Disability legislation and obligations for providers of early years care and education. |
| 13 | Develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. |

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 St Mary's Playgroup is acceptable and is of good quality overall. The children are making generally good progress in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Activities are planned and managed by staff who participate in children's play and offer good opportunities for them to extend their learning. Children have opportunities to experience self selection but they do not always have relevant opportunities to build on their understanding of written language and numbers during activities and routines. Staff provide a balance of adult led activities and play to enable children to develop and progress, although some large group routines do not fully challenge or engage all the children. Children have some opportunities to explore and investigate but these are not frequent or regular and do not make provision for them to record or share their observations.

Staff observations and assessments of children are thorough and methodical and evaluated against the stepping stones and early learning goals. Procedures for children with special educational needs are inclusive and good support is offered to small groups. Planning is flexible and based on what children can do and how they need to progress.

Leadership and management is generally good. The supervisors provide support and guidance and have developed an enthusiastic staff team who have a collaborative approach to their work. The playgroup evaluate and monitor quality through discussions at meetings.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents express their satisfaction with the service and are able to become involved in the management of the group by joining the management committee. Staff provide verbal feedback on children's development, and parents have informal opportunities to contribute to their child's assessment. Staff provide flexible opportunities to encourage parents access the records.

What is being done well?

- Staff are enabling all children to be confident in initiating their own learning by participating in
- role-play scenarios which are used effectively to extend children's play and learning. Staff provide good support and encouragement to increase children's imaginative skills.
- The environment is attractive and offers children good opportunities to see their work displayed and to access a variety of resources independently.
- Relationships between staff and the children and their parents are good,

These help settle children in to the group, develop their confidence and support all aspects of their learning.

What needs to be improved?

- the attention given to increasing children's awareness of print; of the sounds of letters and words; of the different purposes of writing and the opportunities to recognise and write their own names
- the organisation of the whole group times and routines to ensure the pace and routine sustains the interest of all children and challenges their abilities sufficiently
- the opportunities for children to explore and investigate and to extend their learning by recording their observations in varied ways.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good progress has been made in addressing the key issues identified at the previous inspection.

Staff provide opportunities to count at registration time and other activities involving number recognition are used at group times and individually with good staff support. However, this is not always made relevant to the date or direct experience of the children without showing what the number represented, so that staff need to continue to develop this area.

Staff have revised the way in which they observe and record children's attainment: they now select an area from an aspect of one of the 6 areas of learning and observe and assess this over a week for each child. Staff identify the stepping stone relevant to each child's development. The observations and assessments are clear and focussed, providing a reliable basis for assessment and they are used to identify the next steps in each child's learning.

Records of transfer are also completed when children leave the group.

This process ensures that progress is being recorded in all aspects of the six areas of learning during one year of attendance..

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's confidence and self-esteem are built up by staff who are sensitive to their needs and know them well. They are encouraged to be independent and to persist with difficult tasks. They choose between activities, select resources for themselves, and learn to take care of their personal needs, such as dressing themselves, washing their hands and throwing away used tissues. Children behave well. They learn to share and take turns, and to be polite and considerate to others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Many children are keen to communicate with staff either through gestures or talk. They listen to stories, enjoy sharing books with staff and enjoy enacting familiar fairy tales during free play. However, they are not often encouraged to notice print, or the sounds of letters and words. Children have limited opportunities to recognise their names or to write these, and activities such as role play are not consistently extended to include opportunities to write for different purposes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children benefit from group routines and individual support to help them count and to recognise shapes, colours and sizes. Their understanding of numbers is not sufficiently reinforced by taking part in daily tasks such as working out the date. They learn that coins have different values as they buy items in the pretend shop and purchase their snacks. Their awareness of weight and capacity is exploited through the use of resources such as play dough and during cookery.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

The outdoor area and garden are used to stimulate children's interest in the natural world but there are limited opportunities for children to explore and investigate and to record or share their observations during the activities. Planned activities help them notice changes that occur, for example, when cooking or when inks are mixed with water for printing. Children carefully make models from construction kits and are adept at using recycled materials, often used to contribute to displays.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Outdoors children are set challenges, such as climbing; participating in parachute play and manoeuvring rockers and tricycles as well as rolling and crawling through the play tunnel. Staff are on hand to give support and encourage new skills such as helping children to pedal and steer safely. Children learn to handle scissors, pencils, paintbrushes with increasing control and enjoy the opportunities to make their own sandwiches for snack time, learning about healthy eating habits.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

| | |
|------------|----------------|
| Judgement: | Generally Good |
|------------|----------------|

Children enjoy playing in 'the opticians' and the shop and are confident in initiating their own learning. They enjoy dressing up and participate in role-play scenarios which are successfully used by staff to extend their understanding. Children participate enthusiastically in music sessions, using their skills to follow rhythms. They sing simple rhymes, and use their bodies to respond to different sounds and to dance 'The Hokey Cokey'.

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

- increase children's awareness of print, the sounds of letters and words, opportunities to recognise and write their own names and of the different purposes of writing
- review the organisation of the whole group times and routines to ensure the pace and routine sustains the interest of all children and challenges their abilities sufficiently
- provide frequent and regular opportunities for children to explore and investigate and to record their observations in varied ways.

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.