



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 131742

DfES Number: 511859

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	18/07/2003
Inspector Name	Chris Banks

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	St Thomas's Playgroup
Setting Address	St Thomas's Church Monsell Road, Islington London N4 2QY

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of The Committee of St Thomas's Playgroup
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	The Committee of St Thomas's Playgroup
Address	St Thomas's Church Monsell Road, Islington London N4 2QY

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 Thomas's Playgroup is organised and managed by a voluntary parent committee.

Provision is based in the community hall of St Thomas's Church Islington N7 and is registered to care for sixteen children aged between two and five years. It operates a term time service from 9.30am -12.00.

There are currently 16 children on roll, 8 of whom are in receipt of Nursery Education Funding. None are aged over 4 years. Two children are bi lingual.

A core staff team of three are supported by regular parent volunteers. In line with actions set at the previous inspection, staff are undergoing training to meet qualification requirements.

How good is the Day Care?

St Thomas' playgroup provides satisfactory care for children aged 2-5 years.

The environment is safe, well organised and welcoming to children. Activities are planned in a way that helps them make good progress in key areas of development. Toys and equipment are well cared for and suitable for all age groups.

It is a service valued by the local community which benefits from the active involvement of parents who also form part of the management committee.

There is a commitment to ensure staff meet qualification requirements within the agreed timescale.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Good progress has been made in further developing key policies and procedures.

There is now a written equal opportunities statement that is shared with parents. A policy for sick children is in place and the administration of medication procedure has been clarified.

There is also a written commitment to ensure children with special needs are included. Key staff have attended training in this area and now have a copy of the Code of Practice.

Other actions relating to health and safety have been positively addressed.

What is being done well?

- Children are provided with a varied range of activities that support their learning and development. Staff compensate for the poor quality of outdoor play space by ensuring children are taken to local parks and playgrounds on a regular basis.
- The varied range of well cared for resources are made easily accessible to children. These include multi cultural dressing up clothes, books and puzzles.
- There is a newly developed behaviour statement. It outlines in user friendly language how concerns will be dealt with and at what stage parents will become involved.
- Parents actively participate in the running of the group. They are well represented on the management committee and are also involved on a daily basis as parent volunteers.
- Staff keep parents regularly informed about the progress of each child.

What needs to be improved?

- Obtain written permission from parents for emergency medical treatment to children.

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

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	
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Std	Recommendation
7	Obtain written permission from parents for emergency medical treatment to children.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St Thomas's Playgroup offers good quality provision for funded nursery education children. The children are making generally good progress in most areas towards the early learning goals. They are making very good progress in the areas of knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Effective teaching in most areas enables children to gain worthwhile first hand experiences. Children are confident, have fun and are motivated to experiment with a wide range of resources that help them to learn about the world around them.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Effective planning in some areas ensures some long and short-term objectives are achieved; some aspects of the curriculum plans are not sufficiently linked to early learning goals and stepping-stones. The staff respond well to the children, providing useful challenges to motivate them to learn. Occasionally the grouping of children and organisation of time results in some missed opportunities for learning. Children work confidently, independently and in groups. They behave well and receive clear guidance on right and wrong behaviour, which promotes good friendships.

Leadership and management are generally good. Management has a strong commitment to developing the provision, through staff training and liaison with parents and education advisors. The staff are experienced and work collectively to plan a stimulating programme of worthwhile learning experiences for the children. They record children's progress; however this information is not used to plan the next stage of learning, so monitoring becomes less effective.

Partnership with parents is generally good. They receive useful information about the educational programme although no written assessments on children's progress. Parents are very welcome at the playgroup; their contribution is highly encouraged and valued. This enables the children to learn in a very caring, secure and stimulating environment.

What is being done well?

- The well planned activities in knowledge and understanding of the world; helps children to learn about living things and changes in the environment.
- The programme for physical development is very good; children use their bodies in a variety of fun and interesting ways to maintain good health and strength.
- Children have fun and are sufficiently challenged and motivated to gain new experiences.
- The playgroup positively encourages parental involvement in the setting. This

enhances the relationship between children, staff and parents.

- The management demonstrate a strong commitment to developing the provision in practical ways; through staff training and work with an education advisor.

What needs to be improved?

- the grouping of children, in order to maximise learning opportunities
- the use of practical activities, to promote children's understanding of personal independence, music and movement, comparison of numbers and pattern making.
- the use of assessments and plans in partnership with parents, linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals, to plan for the next stage of learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The group have made satisfactory progress in addressing some of the previous key issues. Children benefit from a variety of experiences gained through well-planned outings; they learn about their environment and record their findings. Planning for language, literacy, communication and mathematics is generally good for three year olds. They confidently use books and numbers in practical ways. Assessments and plans are now in place however these are not sufficiently linked to early learning goals and stepping-stones. This results in some aspects of learning being lost or receiving less time.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are confident to try new things, excited and motivated to learn. They have fun selecting resources and are proud of what they achieve. Children behave well. They work happily independently and in groups to learn about one another. Though at times the older children experience difficulty concentrating in large groups and their personal independence is not fully supported through practical activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children enjoy and make good use of books. They use them well to find out about topical issues for example sounds and meaning of new words. During role-play, older children communicate clearly, to organise their tasks in the 'home' corner. They listen well although their ideas are not always extended fully. Children learn to recite rhymes, sing songs and recreate stories based on their experience.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children learn about shapes, size, space and position in practical activities. They enjoy counting from 0 to 20 making good use of books and board games to practice using numbers in interesting ways. They confidently count objects on number cards and use some appropriate language such as 'how many left' when doing simple problem solving. Although they have less time to practice comparing numbers and making patterns.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are excited by the chance to use their senses to explore and investigate natural and made materials. They gain first hand experience of observing animals and environmental changes. They ask questions and record their findings when visiting the local conservation park. They make good use of photographs to develop a sense of time and place as they reflect on past events.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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The children make good use of large climbing apparatus for balancing, climbing, stretching and moving under and over beams. They confidently walk, run and jump safely using controlled, coordinated strides in their movement around the garden area. They are aware of some changes in their bodies and the importance of food and rest for good health. Children safely handle small and large construction materials.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children use their imagination to explore a variety of tools for designing, moulding, sticking, painting, drawing, printing and junk modelling. They enjoy role-play and retelling stories linked to favourite books but ideas were not extended to the inclusion of music and movement. They have less time to explore music and movement.	
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

- Review the grouping of children to enable them to concentrate and develop personal independence in practical activities.
- Provide more opportunities for children to express their ideas creatively in music and movement and communication language and literacy, compare numbers and make patterns.
- Ensure assessments and plans are: sufficiently linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals and used to plan for the next stage of children's learning and made available to parents.

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.