



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 123582

DfES Number: 546139

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 27/01/2005  
Inspector Name Jill Nugent

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name Crescent Playgroup (The)  
Setting Address St.Lukes Church Hall  
The Crescent,Bricket Wood  
St Albans  
Hertfordshire  
AL2 3NF

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Crescent Playgroup 1039644

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Crescent Playgroup  
Address St Lukes Church Hall  
The Crescent  
Bricket Wood, St Albans  
Herts  
AL2 3NF

## 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

The Crescent Playgroup was registered in 1993 and operates from two rooms in St Lukes Church Hall in Bricket Wood, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 28 children can attend at any one time. The playgroup is open on Monday, Tuesday and Friday from 9.30 to 12.00, and on Thursday from 9.20 to 15.10, during term time. Children have access to the garden in dry weather.

There are currently 33 children on roll aged from two-and-a-half to under five years. Of these 5 three-year-olds and 1 four-year-old receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports one child with special educational needs.

The playgroup employs 7 staff, 5 of whom have appropriate early years qualifications. It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives input from a qualified teacher.

## 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 The Crescent Playgroup is of good quality overall. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical and Creative Development and generally good progress in the two other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. The provision is very well organised and staff ensure that all children are involved. The daily routine, combined with an effective use of resources, gives children a good choice of activities throughout each session. Staff interact with children, giving clear explanations and posing some challenging questions. Children with special educational needs are given good support. The activities are planned around interesting weekly themes and cover all areas of learning. Staff make regular observations of children's progress although the recording system does not link appropriately to the stepping stones.

The leadership and management of the playgroup is generally good. The leader and deputy work closely together and ensure that staff's particular strengths are used to good effect. They have recently gained extra qualifications and encourage other staff to attend courses. The leader keeps the playgroup well-resourced and is always on the lookout for ways to improve the provision. She liaises with staff when evaluating the educational programme, although there are no written evaluations.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents receive information about the activities provided, including the weekly topics, but they are not given any information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum and the early learning goals. They appreciate the friendly approach of staff and their availability to talk at any time. Staff are happy to share records of children's progress with parents when requested to do so.

### What is being done well?

- Staff organise the sessions so that children are kept interested and happy. They provide a good choice of toys and equipment each day and change the layout of the hall from day to day.
- Children have good opportunities to investigate different materials in cooking activities. They discuss the smell and feel, and notice changes when mixing ingredients. They discover the need for water when growing vegetable tops.
- Children take part in a wide variety of physical activities. They are developing skills using bats, balls and hoops and have fun with a large parachute. They use their hands well in cooking activities, rolling pastry and spooning out ingredients.

- Children are learning to express themselves creatively in art and music. They create patterns and are beginning to represent particular objects and figures using paint. They enjoy making sounds with different musical instruments, including some from Cuba.

**What needs to be improved?**

- records of observation used for assessing children's progress
- information for parents about the Foundation Stage and their children's progress towards the early learning goals

**What has improved since the last inspection?**

Not applicable.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happily involved in activities and keen to try out new ones, such as making quiches. They relate well to adults, responding excitedly to invitations to take part. They persevere at difficult tasks like cutting vegetables, and willingly help out at tidy-up time. Their behaviour is very good and they are becoming aware of the need for rules, for example, when jumping through a skipping rope. Children take initiative in choosing resources and activities and are gaining in confidence.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are learning new vocabulary through the use of weekly themes. They listen attentively to stories related to the theme, responding to questions about the pictures. They enjoy sharing books with adults and are learning to recognise letters of the alphabet. Children have good opportunities to explore mark-making and are developing their hand-eye co-ordination using stencils. However, they are not always helped to ascribe meaning to marks through adults' modelling of writing.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy counting together as a group and are often encouraged to count during activities. They join in number rhymes enthusiastically, counting along. They discuss how many legs are needed on a trampoline, although staff do not always take the opportunity to develop children's problem solving skills. Children use and talk about different shapes and they enjoy jigsaw puzzles. They compare sizes, for example, when sorting cut-out hand shapes and measuring objects against each other.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children have very good opportunities for exploring and investigating different things, such as vegetables and ice-cubes. They construct models using bricks and recycled materials. They learn about different environments and are developing an awareness of different cultures when talking about festivals or using resources from other countries. Children recall the various steps involved in cooking activities. They find out how things work when playing with telephones, tills and programmable toys.

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
------------	-----------

Children are developing good control and co-ordination when taking part in climbing, balancing and jumping activities. They are confident on the trampoline and when riding small vehicles. They negotiate space well and skilfully adjust their speed and direction to jump through a skipping rope. Children are developing good manipulative skills using a variety of tools, including spades, shape cutters, knives and forks. They discuss the health value of eating vegetables and cleaning their teeth.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
------------	-----------

Children explore colour mixing using a selection of paints. They express their own ideas in their paintings and talk with staff about their pictures. They learn different techniques with marbles, bubbles and sponges and use textured materials. They enjoy participating in imaginative play using a variety of resources as props, for example, playfood, bags & tills. They join in acting out familiar stories, such as 'The Enormous Turnip', and are acquiring a repertoire of familiar rhymes and 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**

- provide parents and carers with information on the Foundation Stage of learning and the early learning goals
- develop the system of assessment so that records link more closely to the stepping stones and can be shared with parents and carers

*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.*