



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 400342

DfES Number: 580630

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 14/02/2005
Inspector Name Carol Eaman

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St Josephs Playgroup
Setting Address 281 Skipton Road
Harrogate
North Yorkshire
HG1 3HD

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of St Josephs Playgroup

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Josephs Playgroup
Address 281 Skipton Road
Harrogate
North Yorkshire
HG1 3HD

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

St.Joseph's Playgroup is committee run and has been established since 1986. The group operates within St.Joseph's R.C. Church, close to the centre of Harrogate and serves the local community. The large church hall is used for general play and a smaller room provides space for creative activities.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. The playgroup opens during term time from 9:00 to 12:00 on Monday and Friday; and from 9:00 to 13:00 hours on Tuesday and Thursday; on Wednesday 9:00 to 11:30.

There are currently 24 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 17 children receive funding for nursery education.

Three members of staff are employed to work with the children, two of whom hold the Diploma in Pre-School Practice. The playgroup receives advisory teacher support and can access training through North Yorkshire's Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and promotes a 'Learning Through Play' method of teaching.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St, Joseph's Playgroup nursery education provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a very secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and work together well as a team. They show commitment and dedication, providing stimulating activities for the children which have to be set up and cleared away each day. They respond with interest and enthusiasm to the children, using a variety of teaching methods to sustain the children's interest and make the most of learning opportunities. Good relationships are fostered and clear ground rules are established for the children's behaviour. This results in caring individuals who are sensitive towards others and have positive attitudes towards learning. An effective key-worker system is used to monitor the children's progress and this influences further detailed planning. Staff value the children's achievements and frequently give them praise.

The leadership and management of the playgroup are very good. The current play leaders have built a strong working partnership over the past four years and are very clear in their role. They share their visions for the group with another staff member, the committee and parent helpers, utilizing each others strengths to best effect. They review policies and procedures and regularly attend training, however, their special needs policy does not relate directly to the 2001 Code of Practice. Good links have been made with the local school.

The playgroup has established a very good partnership with parents who support the group in a variety of ways. Information about the education programme is shared through newsletters and displays on notice boards, but the initial 'welcome' literature does not give detail on the six areas of learning. Parents can share information about their child's progress and have a high opinion of the playgroup.

What is being done well?

- Staff teach and interact with the children very well. They encourage them to have enquiring minds and use their initiative as they learn through play. High standards are established for children's behaviour and there is a good balance between adult-led and child initiated activities.
- The children's mathematical development is strongly developed in all areas of learning. Children are able to count, recognise shapes, talk about position and size and they begin to appreciate quantity and measure.
- A rich learning environment promotes children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children have first hand opportunities to study the natural world, experience the traditions of other countries and cultures

and they use technology well to support their learning.

- The children's creative awareness is given high priority. Children freely access a wide range of art and craft materials enabling them to spontaneously produce artwork. Displays of the children's own work are highly valued and reinforce current topics of interest.
- There is a very good partnership with parents and the playgroup has close links with St. Joseph's R.C (VA) Primary School, leading to a smooth transition between home, playgroup and school.

What needs to be improved?

- the policy for Special Educational Needs
- the initial information given to parents on the six areas of learning

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection when the playgroup had two key issues to address. These required the group to: give more attention to the teaching of communication, language and literacy and ensure that staff were well deployed, offering children appropriate activities and levels of support.

Staff are now more experienced and confident in their work. Books are well promoted in all areas of learning, new vocabulary is introduced and good use is made of planned and daily opportunities to introduce the shapes and sounds of letters.

The staff are well deployed and actively support children at their play to develop their ideas and sustain their interest, for example in the home area prompting them to plan a birthday party involving, making phone calls, writing invitations, making a birthday cake and singing.

All children display good levels of concentration in their chosen areas of play, pursuing activities that are appropriate to their individual stage of development.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are very motivated and eager to learn excited by stimulating activities. They select resources independently for their self-chosen activities and form good relationships with each other and adults as they play. All children display very good social skills and manners and readily accept simple courteous rules. They manage their personal needs well as they wash their hands or change for PE and are willing to help friends. Daily prayers encourage children to be thankful and kind.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children interact well in groups and express their ideas with confidence. They listen to stories and rhymes with obvious enjoyment, often learning new vocabulary and show interest in information books which are well displayed to support learning. Children quickly find and read their name cards and have a good awareness of the shapes and sounds of letters. They write enthusiastically on party invitations and in cards with some four year olds beginning to form letters correctly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Opportunities to extend children's mathematical abilities are maximised by staff. Children count with ease in many daily routines, identify numerals on a teddy bear number line and name mathematical shapes confidently. When baking they measure then add ingredients and solve problems deciding how many more children need some biscuit mix. Number songs counting down from 5 -1 are enjoyed and help children's understanding of subtraction. Children often compare the length, size or height of objects.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children show interest in nature as they plant daffodils, smell hyacinths and examine features of insects with magnifying glasses. They go on local outings to the shops, a farm and the library and find out about the traditions of many other people. They experiment with small and large construction materials being proud of their designs and the computer is shared well and used to good effect. Children keenly talk about their families and past events and some take the group's toy dog travelling.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move with increasing skill as they balance along beams, jump on a trampoline and weave in and out of cones. Good concentration is shown when throwing or catching balls and beanbags. Children learn the importance of warm -up exercises and realise that physical activities change their bodies, for example, becoming breathless after running. All children show good hand-eye co-ordination; three year olds use correct pincer grip when drawing and four year olds handle scissors well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children explore a wide range of textures and learn colours as they paint, design cards or manipulate dough. Direct involvement from staff enhances imaginative play as children excitedly plan birthday parties using appropriate props and resources. Children are familiar with many songs which they perform with joy and they listen to different styles of music. Their sensory awareness is promoted as they draw in soft white hand cream, smell hyacinths, feel compost or taste healthy snacks.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improve the following:
- develop the playgroup's special needs policy to include reference to the 2001 Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs so that all staff and parents are aware of the contents of this document and the policy reflects the working practise of the group
- add more information on the six areas of learning to the ' Welcome' literature that is given to parents, enabling them to become more familiar with the Foundation Stage curriculum.

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.