



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 146861

DfES Number: 546163

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 18/10/2004
Inspector Name Margaret Coyne

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Ashwell Playgroup
Setting Address West End
Ashwell
Baldock
Hertfordshire
SG7 5PJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Ashwell Playgroup 1081830

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Ashwell Playgroup
Address West End
Ashwell
Baldock
Hertfordshire
SG7 5RN

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

Ashwell Playgroup opened in 1975. The playgroup operates from the village hall in the village of Ashwell between Baldock and Royston. The group have access to a large hall with toilet and kitchen facilities. There are two outside areas available for the children to access. The playgroup serves the local community and surrounding areas.

There are currently 26 children from 2.6 years to 4 years on roll. This includes 7 funded three year olds. The group has systems in place to support any children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup is open four days a week term time only. Sessions are from 09.30 until 12.00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are five members of staff working directly with the children. Over half the staff have an early years qualification to NVQ level two or three and NNEB.

The school receives support from an early years teacher and a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Ashwell Playgroup provides good quality care for children. The premises are well managed with a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Most records and documentation are in place for the safe and efficient management of the playgroup.

The operational plan covers all aspects of the day-to-day organisation of the group. Children are grouped well with excellent staff support and an effective range of resources. Staff training needs are recognised through appraisals and staff have a good awareness of their roles and responsibilities. Staff show a high level of awareness of risks to children's health and safety and most precautions are taken to ensure risks are kept to a minimum. However staff must ensure children are supervised on the back stairs.

Space is used effectively and the activities are purposeful, stimulating and interesting which children enjoy. Resources are well presented to encourage children to play. Staff are fully involved with the children support their play and build warm and trusting relationships. Staff encourage and praise the children which clearly fosters their confidence and self-esteem. Staff implement the behaviour management policy consistently. They are well deployed throughout the group and have high expectations and employ suitable strategies to encourage children to behave well. Snack time is implemented through a snack bar system. However children do not have independent access to a drink during the session.

There is good information shared with parents. They receive detailed information about the group in newsletters, notice board and an information booklet. Staff are friendly and approachable and make time to talk to parents at collection time. Parents are pro-active in supporting the group through the management committee and with a well subscribed parents rota. They receive information about the activities their child has taken part in so they can play an active role in their child's day.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the provider agreed to; take steps to ensure the Area Child Protection Committee procedures are in place, to show clear outlines in the operation plan for any outings and how safety will be ensured at these times, to ensure the registration certificate is displayed and to introduce a suitable risk assessment.

All actions have now been met; the group have obtained the ACPC procedures and include them in the child protection policy. Outings are clearly defined in the operational plan including safety aspects during these times. The registration certificate is displayed on the parents notice board. A suitable risk assessment has been introduced and is implemented by all staff.

What is being done well?

- Children enjoy a range of interesting, stimulating and challenging activities which they freely access. Children confidently move around the room and are occupied during the session. Staff are fully involved with the children, interact well and are attentive to their needs. There is a good balance between adult and child initiated activities.
- The range of toys, equipment and play materials is excellent. Individual areas of play are well set up which encourages children to take part and play. Children have opportunity to explore and investigate using a range of equipment which staff imaginatively introduce, including items such as marble painting, hand washing dolls clothes and a treasure basket.
- Children are confident and their feelings of security are well fostered by staff. Staff respond to children's interests and give praise and encouragement for their achievements. The group has created a calm, happy environment which has a positive impact on the children's behaviour play and learning.

- Staff are friendly and approachable and have built good relationships with parents and carers. Parents receive detailed information about the group, all required consents are in place and parents play an active role in the management committee and with the parents rota. This enables them to have a hands on approach to their child's care, learning and play.

What needs to be improved?

- safety, with regard to the absence of a hand-rail on the back stairs
- children's access to drinking water during the session
- documentation, with regard to job descriptions for all staff and the inclusion of the regulators details in the complaints policy.

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	Ensure children have independent access to fresh water during the session.
14	Ensure all documentation is in place with regard to providing suitable job descriptions for staff and including the regulators details in the complaints policy.

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 Ashwell Playgroup is good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a clear understanding of the early learning goals and use planning successfully in most areas to introduce children to an effective learning environment. However some areas of learning could be further extended to ensure children reach their full potential. Assessments of children's progress are informative and give a clear picture of their development.

Staff are well deployed throughout the session, offer activities that engage and maintain the children's interest. Staff provide purposeful activities that stimulate and challenge the children and activities and topics overlap into other areas of learning. Children investigate and explore within their local environment and enjoy using familiar role-play and natural objects. Staff have built warm relationships with the children, foster feelings of security and build children's confidence. Children behave well and respond to direction from staff.

Leadership and management is generally good. A dedicated manager works closely with a committed team of staff. They are well supported by the management committee. The group continually monitors their practise. Staff have the benefit of an appraisal system and attend regular staff meetings. Areas for development are discussed although not clearly documented.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Staff are friendly and approachable and available for informal discussions about their child. However parents do not have a formal consultation time to see their child's records and discuss these with key staff or opportunity to view the short term activity plans in order to extend learning at home.

What is being done well?

- Children's fine motor control is developed well with the use of resources and activities to increase their dexterity and hand and eye coordination. Children use glue spreaders, brushes and pencils and manage small world figures and jigsaws effectively. Their large motor control is skilfully developed with the constructive use of resources such as climbing frames, balancing equipment and bikes.
- Children's language skills are developed as they take part in group discussions and during free play. They discuss events that are important to them and use language when playing with others in role play situations. Their language is well supported by staff as they skilfully engage in the children's

play and encourage them to think for themselves.

- Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is explored through a range of interesting topics and activities. They are able to investigate and explore within their environment and discover how things grow and change. Children have opportunity to use a range of resources to extend their understanding of the natural world and of different cultures and beliefs.
- Children use their own imaginations within role play situations and act out familiar roles such as doctors and nurses. They have ample opportunity to express themselves using their own imaginations with creative work and enjoy taking part both individually and as a group.

What needs to be improved?

- extending the opportunities available for children to use their independence skills, to further their awareness that print carries meaning and to develop their problem solving skills
- opportunities for parents to take part in formal discussions about their child's progress and to have access to the short term plans in order to extend learning at home
- the development of relevant action plans to identify and implement any areas recognised for improvement.

What has improved since the last inspection?

not applicable

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have a positive approach to new experiences which are well fostered by staff. They confidently try new things such as hand washing the dolls clothes and seek out friends to share experiences. They are motivated and concentration levels are growing. Their independence skills are developing in most areas but could be further fostered at snack time. Children know what is expected of them and have a positive attitude towards behaviour which is reinforced by good role models.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children vocabulary is extended as they share information about personal events and objects from home. They use language for a wide range of purpose as they take part in discussion, free play and use their imaginations in play. Children take part in purposeful writing and mark making during activities and most can recognise their name and the sounds the letters make. However they have few opportunities to gain an awareness that print carries meaning with the lack of labelling around the room.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use their mathematical knowledge in a range of activities. They confidently count and recognise numerals up to ten and beyond. They use numbers, measuring, weighing, sequencing and matching in structured activities and general play which help form the basis of early maths. Children recognise numbers that hold personal significance as they point out their age on the till and phone. However children do not gain a firm understanding of problem solving through practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn about the natural world through observation during trips and investigation about how things grow. They take part in simple experiments to experience change such as melting ice. Children have access to a range of technology equipment and have fun while learning about its use. Children develop an awareness of time as they talk about special events and relate the routine of the day. They are effectively introduced to different cultures and beliefs through well planned topics.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children's fine and large motor control is well developed due to the balance of directed sessions and the quality of interaction with children during free play activities. Opportunities for movement, climbing and balancing are provided indoors and out and staff ensure the tasks are appropriate for children of differing abilities. Children are competent using a range of resources which develop their dexterity and hand and eye coordination. Children learn the importance of eating healthily.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children enjoy being creative using a range of materials, textures and techniques i.e. marble paintings and texture rubbings. They have ample opportunity to create with free expression and individuality. Staff display the children's work in an attractive way. They support them in a variety of role play using dressing up, small world figures and theme based play such as doctors, shops, and café's. They enjoy singing and using instruments, discovering different sounds and tones.

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

- Extend the opportunities available to the children to use their independence skills particularly during snack times, to develop children's awareness that print carries meaning with the identification of familiar objects around the room and to increase opportunities for the children to use their mathematical knowledge to solve simple problems.
- Develop further opportunities for parents and carers to take part in formal discussions about their child's progress and achievements and to have access to the short term plans in order to help extend learning at home.
- Ensure suitable action plans are developed to identify and implement actions recognised for future development.

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.