



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 135391

DfES Number: 512985

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	24/09/2003
Inspector Name	Julia Louise Crowley

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	St Mary Magdalene Playgroup
Setting Address	Windmill Hill Enfield Middlesex EN2 7AJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Sandra Pearce
------	-------------------

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

Mary Magdalene Playgroup opened in 1993. It operates from the large hall, within the Magdalene Church Hall. The playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently forty six children from two and a half to five on the attendance register. This includes 19 funded three year olds.

The group opens four days a week during school term times all year round. Sessions are from 09:30 am - 12:00pm, Tuesday to Friday, and 12:45pm - 15:15pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

There are five full time staff that work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3 or the equivalent. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)

How good is the Day Care?

Mary Magdalene Pre-school provides satisfactory quality care for children aged 2-5 years.

The manager and half of the staff all have relevant childcare qualifications. The playgroup is generally well organised, however the staff's skills and knowledge in encouraging children to have positive and stimulating experiences are limited.

The children are treated as individuals which enables them to be confident and happy. The staff are aware of individual children's needs, and they are mostly catered for. The Playgroup is a safe environment where the children can play confidently in familiar surroundings. The outdoor area is a large space which enables the children to explore and play safely.

There is a good range of toys and activities available at the playgroup, however for younger children there is a lack of accessibility. Activities are generally effective

however sometimes lack extension so that the children can think creatively, experiment and explore. Opportunities for the staff to discuss with the children in group settings are sometimes lost, due to the completion of practical tasks.

Mary Magdalene Playgroup provides a welcoming place for parents, where they are encouraged to talk with staff at any time. Parents are kept informed about their child's development on an informal daily basis. The playgroup have an informative prospectus and all policies and procedures are available to the parents. This enables the parents to have a better understanding of the playgroup and how it is run.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, Mary Magdalene Playgroup were set actions, all of these have been completed for the benefit of the service.

What is being done well?

- There is a strong emphasis on the emotional needs of the children and a thorough 'settling in' process is encouraged.
- The surroundings are safe and secure.
- Languages used by the children other than English, are positively supported.

What needs to be improved?

- the storage, presentation and accessibility of the play materials and equipment
- the activities to allow the children to have ideas, explore and experiment
- opportunities to foster independence throughout the sessions
- the play space to foster opportunities for rest and relaxation in a quiet area.

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

Std	Recommendation
2	ensure good use is made of staff, space and other resources.
3	spend more time playing and talking to the children to develop their language and imagination and organise toys and activities so that younger children can select them easily.
4	provide a warm and welcoming space that encourages the children to enjoy quiet activities and relax.
5	ensure that children are interested and want to play with what is available.
8	ensure that drink time provides the children with a positive experience in which they gain knowledge and understanding.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

There are significant weaknesses in the progress children are making towards the early learning goals in the areas of communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. The children make generally good progress in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and creative development and physical development.

There are weaknesses in the quality of teaching. Staff plan many interesting topics for children under the six areas of learning. Some staff ask questions to encourage children's thinking. However, opportunities are missed to extend discussions and conversations by following children's answers to questions and line of thinking.

There is some recording of children's progress, however learning is not assessed and next steps in children's learning is not normally identified and included in plans.

The leadership and management is generally good and is based on the philosophy about how young children learn through a play environment. Staff are encouraged to attend training. However, there is little time set aside for staff to plan and discuss their work and opportunities for the team to share their observations, good practice and new ideas are limited.

The Pre School works well with parents overall. They are given good information about the provision and their children's progress. Parents appreciate the care and commitment of the staff.

What is being done well?

- Children have positive attitudes, they respond enthusiastically to new experiences related to their topic work.
- Staff have high expectations for good behaviour and the development of children's social skills.
- Children are confident speakers.

What needs to be improved?

- children's opportunities to develop independence and to self select equipment.
- planned investigation and experiments with items for exploration and discovery of how and why things happen.
- the use of more open ended question in order to encourage children to think and problem solve.
- continue to improve the systems for the assessment and planning of activities

to support children's learning.

- staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection there has been some work done on a system to record under the six areas of learning. Some staff are recording and as a result planning for children's next steps, however for the majority observation and planning has little effect on children's learning

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Children make generally good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Children are learning to make good relationships and to share and take turns. They co-operate with others and learn to recognise right from wrong. Children have a positive attitude towards the playgroup and appear eager to attend. There are however too few opportunities for children to self select activities and develop there independence.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
------------	------------------------

There are significant weaknesses in this area of learning. Children contribute their ideas and share their experiences. However, encouragement for extended conversation is not always given. Children's knowledge of letter sounds is not secure and they have few opportunities to write in their play. Children find it hard to listen and participate at story times and they show little interest in the books provided.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Children are making generally good progress in mathematical development. They are learning to count through a range of practical activities. Number songs, stories and rhymes are beginning to be used to introduce children to addition and subtraction. Children use mathematical language, however there are limited opportunities for them to recognise numerals and patterns.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
------------	------------------------

There are significant weaknesses in this area of learning. Children talk about themselves and remember past events. However they are not provided with planned experiments to explore and discover how and why things happen. There is little evidence of staff using open-ended questions to encourage problem solving. Children have opportunities to build with a range of construction equipment. The opportunities for children to learn about every day technology is not effective.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Children's progress in this area is generally good. Children have good co-ordination and control; they use of the wide range of large and small equipment available throughout each session skilfully and safely. They are learning how to care for themselves and each other, however there are too few opportunities for children to learn about the need for a healthy diet and the effects of food and exercise on their bodies.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
<p>Children's progress in this area is generally good. They are confident and imaginative in their use of role play areas. They enjoy the music sessions and use musical instruments and have opportunities for singing throughout the week. However, art activities are very adult led which results in children having limited opportunities to design and make things through open ended art activities.</p>	
<p>Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.</p>	

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Provide opportunities for children to develop independence and to self select equipment.
- Activities planned for investigation and experiments with items for exploration and discovery of how and why things happen.
- The use of more open ended question in order to encourage children to think and problem solve.
- The systems for observation, assessment and planning of activities to support children's learning
- Staff's knowledge of 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.

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.