



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 113519

DfES Number: 525172

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 12/07/2004
Inspector Name Joanne Lindsey Caswell

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Heather Playgroup
Setting Address North Heath Lane School
Erica Way
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 5XL

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Heather Playgroup 802275

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Heather Playgroup
Address Erica Way
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 5XL

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

Heather Playgroup opened in 1978. It operates from a single-storey building, within the grounds of North Heath County Primary School, in a residential area of Horsham, West Sussex. Children have access to a large room, toilets and an enclosed outdoor area. Staff have access to a kitchen. The playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently 36 children, aged from 3 to 4 years, on roll. This includes 21 funded 3-year-olds and 11 funded 4-year-olds. The group is experienced in supporting children with special educational needs. There are currently no funded children present, for whom English is an additional language.

The playgroup opens Monday to Friday, during school term times. Sessions last from 09:00 to 12:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

A team of six staff work with the children. Three of these have an early years qualification. All staff members have attended first aid and child protection training.

Staff provide a play-based curriculum with emphasis placed on learning through play and exploration.

How good is the Day Care?

Heather Playgroup provides good quality care for children. The staff team have worked together for many years and support one another well. The premises are clean and well-maintained and offer a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment for children. Resources are in good condition and are easily accessible to children. Regulatory documentation is in place, although some documents need reviewing and updating.

Staff are extremely vigilant regarding children's health and safety and good procedures are in place to keep the premises secure and prevent the spread of infection. Children are taught the importance of good hygiene, such as hand

washing and covering their mouths when they cough. Staff implement an equal opportunities policy and the activity programme, and range of resources, ensure children are introduced to a wider range of cultures and customs. Children with special needs are supported well. Staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding child protection.

Staff organise a stimulating and varied range of activities, ensuring children are busy and occupied and challenged accordingly. Full use is made of the outside play area to extend children's learning and provide a wider range of play opportunities, such as gardening and nature activities. Children's behaviour is managed well. Staff encourage a positive and fair environment and recognise children's achievements. Children respond well to the praise and positive attention they are given.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff ensure parents are kept fully informed of all relevant information, such as staff news, forthcoming activities and curriculum topics. Opportunities are in place for parents to become involved in the playgroup, such as by sharing skills, helping with fundraising and by assisting staff by tidying up the garden and outside play area. Good provision is in place for parents to regularly discuss children's progress with staff.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the group agreed to ensure written parental consent is obtained for any necessary emergency treatment. This has now been obtained from parents and is held on file for each child in the playgroup and is readily available to staff, should an accident occur.

The group also agreed to provide a procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. At present, the child protection policy has not yet been updated to include this procedure, although staff have agreed to address this.

What is being done well?

- Staff provide a wide range of play and learning opportunities, incorporating all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children enjoy a well-balanced daily routine and have access to a good selection of free play and structured activities.
- Staff interact very well with children and form strong relationships with them. Children are very happy and approach staff confidently.
- Staff provide a very relaxed, happy and caring environment. Staff are aware of children's differing needs and provide for them accordingly.
- Staff utilise the outside play area very well. Children enjoy a wide range of activities, such as climbing, using wheeled toys, balancing, gardening and nature activities.
- Good procedures in place to ensure high levels of health and safety. Staff are aware of good hygiene practice and ensure children are taught about the

importance of safety. Good provision is in place to keep the premises secure and safe.

What needs to be improved?

- the details stated in the uncollected child and child protection policies
- the procedures for reviewing and updating regulatory documentation.

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
2	Review uncollected child policy to meet National Standards for sessional care.
13	Review child protection policy to include details of procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.
14	Ensure all regulatory documentation is regularly reviewed and amended where necessary.

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 Heather Playgroup is acceptable and of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff form very positive relationships with children and identify their differing needs well. They provide a wide range of curriculum activities and adopt practical, fun-based teaching methods to encourage children to enjoy learning, such as group role play games and outside activities, such as gardening and practising road safety with the ride-on toys. Staff plan an interesting range of topics and themes and ensure all areas of the curriculum are covered. Planning records are detailed although, at present, not all staff consistently record the same details. Staff have a good working knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the stepping stones to learning and these are clearly recorded on all plans. Staff manage children's behaviour very well and promote a fair and positive environment, which children respond very well to.

The leadership and management is very good. The supervisor and committee work in partnership to share administrative and management responsibilities to enable the supervisor to spend more time with the children. Good procedures are in place for ensuring good liaison with the feeder schools the children move on to, particularly with North Heath School, the neighbouring school. Staff are encouraged to undertake further training and to ensure their knowledge and skills are kept up-to-date. The staff team is well-established and strong.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are given detailed information about the setting and are regularly informed about their children's progress and development. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and to share any particular skills and knowledge, particularly during the recent topic of People Who Help Us.

What is being done well?

- Children are confident and happy and are given ample opportunities to develop their independence and positive attitude towards learning.
- Children's communication and conversational skills are very good. They engage in fluent conversations with staff and their peers and use language to think creatively and negotiate in their play.
- Children are developing a very good understanding of the community in which they live and the wider world. Very good provision is in place for children to develop an understanding of nature and environmental issues and increase their awareness of the role of others.

- Children's mathematical skills are well-developed. Staff utilise all opportunities within the daily routine to encourage practical maths activities, such as counting, calculation and measuring and develop use of the appropriate mathematical language.
- Staff work very well together as a professional and dedicated team. They support one another fully and demonstrate a good balance of experience, knowledge and skills.

What needs to be improved?

- the details included in the planning records.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection in June 2000, when three key issues were raised:

1) Ensure all staff use the same approach to teach children to recognise letters of the alphabet by shape and sound and give good priority to the emphasis of learning the sounds of the letters.

Staff have made good progress in this area. All staff are aware of the group's policy in teaching letters and sounds phonetically. The curriculum programme is planned accordingly to ensure all letters of the alphabet are taught in rotation with supporting topics and activities, enabling children to develop an understanding of the sounds of the alphabet in a practical and creative format.

2) Build on the improvements made since the last inspection in the recording of children's progress and attainments. For easy reference, and as an aid to inform planning, detail the letters of the alphabet and numbers up to ten and show how children progress in learning to recognise and write them. Extend written records to show children's physical competence.

Staff have made progress in developing this area. Individual record sheets are provided, detailing each letter of the alphabet and numbers to ten. Children's progress in learning to write and recognise each letter and number is clearly recorded in the assessment record and progress towards learning to write the numbers and letters is clearly evidenced.

3) Look at ways of providing opportunities for parents to see and share the group's written assessments of children's progress and attainments. Make provision for parents' contributions of their assessments of children's achievements.

Staff have made very good progress in this area. In addition to a daily exchange of information between parents and staff, formal parent/teacher meetings are held annually to share information regarding individual children's progress and achievements and staff ensure all parents are fully involved in their children's assessment.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are familiar with playgroup routines and co-operate well in small and large groups. They are developing independence and behave well, clearly understanding acceptable boundaries and staff expectation. Children enjoy very good relationships with staff and their peers and are encouraged to be polite and show consideration for others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children listen with interest to stories and are developing a keen love of books and use them for a purpose. Children speak fluently and confidently and convey their needs effectively. They are beginning to learn the sounds of letters and most children are able to recognise their own names. There are good opportunities for children to practise writing skills, particularly during role play activities, and some children are able to write words from memory and sound words out phonetically.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are introduced to the concepts of number, shape, volume, size, pattern and weight through topic-work and free play. Many children can count confidently to ten and most children are able to recognise numbers. Children learn about number through all activities and at incidental opportunities, such as snack-time and when singing number rhymes. Calculation is introduced to children through practical activities, such as playing games with a dice and counting on and taking away.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children have many opportunities to learn about the natural world. They observe the weather each day and participate in gardening activities, such as growing vegetables and planting seeds. Very good provision is in place to teach children about the wider world and community in which they live. Children enjoy a number of visits and outings, such as visits from the paramedics and fire service and outings to the village shop and post office to buy a stamp and send a card home.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children develop physical skills through regular access to outside play and using a very good range of resources and apparatus, such as climbing frame, slide, wheeled toys, balancing equipment and bats and balls. Children develop their hand-eye co-ordination through mark making and writing, threading, painting and play dough activities, where they use a range of tools with increasing skill.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are able to express their feelings through regular access to art and craft, musical instruments, dressing-up clothes and role play resources. They explore colour, shape and form through frequent use of messy play materials such as dough, sand, paint and collage. Children develop their imagination through well-planned group role play. A good example of this, is when a parent who works as a flight attendant visited, and organised snack time as though they were on an aeroplane.

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 improving the following:
- review the current format for curriculum planning to ensure all records are consistent and all staff clearly record the intended learning outcomes, staff deployment and any extension/adaptation activities.

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.