



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 229110

DfES Number: 518682

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 21/02/2005
Inspector Name Jan Burnet

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Four Oaks Pre-School Playgroup
Setting Address Edge Hill Road
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
B74 4PA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Edge Hill Pre-School Playgroup

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Edge Hill Pre-School Playgroup
Address c/o Four Oaks Infants School
Edge Hill Road
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
B74 4PA

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

Four Oaks Pre-School Playgroup was registered in 1993. It is currently located in the school hall within Four Oaks Junior School in Sutton Coldfield, whilst new premises are built in the grounds of the adjacent Infant School. A maximum of 25 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. In its temporary setting the playgroup is open term time only each weekday from 09:00 to noon and on Wednesdays from 13:30 to 15:30. When the playgroup moves into its new premises by May 2005 opening times for the morning group will be 08:45 to 12:45. The school playground is used for outdoor play.

There are currently 37 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 27 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Most live locally but there are no restrictions and vacancies are available to all who apply. A programme of support is in place for children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs three full time and two job share staff. Three, including the leader, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Staff are supported by a parent committee and the group has Pre-School Learning Alliance membership.

How good is the Day Care?

Four Oaks Pre-School Playgroup provides satisfactory care for children. The environment is warm and welcoming and in their temporary premises staff ensure that the routine is well balanced and resources meet the needs of children aged from two to under five years. Staff are aware of available training courses and all have attended first aid and child protection training. However, there is currently no system in place to discuss their professional development and how training needs will be met. The induction procedure for new staff is thorough, but currently all job descriptions are the same and there is no identification of the deputy's role. Documentation and records are well organised and are kept up to date. Times should be included in the attendance record.

Safety and security are given a high priority. Risk assessments have been drawn up and the fire procedure is displayed. The fire drill is practised regularly. Staff are active in promoting good health and hygiene. Children are provided with a drink of milk and fruit midway through the session.

The interaction between the staff and the children is good. Children are happy and settled and relate well to each other, staff and parent helpers. Toys and equipment are used to provide a balanced range of activities for all children. However, activities are either adult led or supported and during inspection children were seldom observed to be independent learners. Children at different stages of development would benefit from the organisation of smaller group times and although staff record observations they are not using recorded information to plan the next steps for individual children. Staff are good role models and are consistent in their management of behaviour. Resources reflect positive images of culture, gender and disability and are supplemented with books borrowed from the local library.

Partnership with parents is given a high priority. Parents are asked to attend as volunteers on a rota basis.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable as there were no actions raised at the previous inspection.

What is being done well?

- The relationships between the staff and the children are good. Children are happy and settled and show great interest in the variety of activities provided for them. In conversation with children staff extend thinking and vocabulary and they praise and encourage. Children show consideration for others, share and take turns.
- Health issues are given a high priority. All staff members hold in date first aid certificates and three have completed food hygiene training. The first aid box is well stocked.

What needs to be improved?

- the grouping of children according to age, ability and needs
- the development of job descriptions to identify different levels of responsibility and roles, specifically for a deputy leader
- the continued encouragement for staff to maintain their professional development, for example with an appraisal system to ensure that training needs are identified and met
- the use of records of what children can do to plan the next steps in their learning and play
- opportunities for children to play and learn independently, initiate their own activities and explore freely

- the inclusion of hours of attendance in the daily record of children looked after.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

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 that within the large group there are times when children are split into groups according to age, ability and needs.
2	Develop job descriptions to identify different levels of responsibility and roles, specifically for a deputy leader.
2	Continue to encourage staff to maintain their professional development, for example with an appraisal system to ensure that training needs are identified and met.
3	Ensure that records of what children can do are used to plan the next steps in their learning and play.
3	Ensure that children are given time to play and learn independently, initiate their own activities and explore freely.
14	Include hours of attendance in the daily record of children looked after.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Four Oaks Preschool Playgroup offers good quality nursery education, which helps three and four year old children make generally good progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff provide a wide variety of fun and stimulating activities and children show interest and enjoyment. However, written plans lack sufficient detail and staff are not always aware of the focus of activities, resulting in some children who are not consistently challenged or supported. Staff record and assess children's progress, but this system is under development and information gained from parents and staff observations of individual children is not effectively used to inform future planning. Resources and activities generally meet the children's needs, however, not all equipment is available on a regular basis. Adults and children interact well, but high levels of adult input often results in children's independence and imagination being restricted. Staff manage children's behaviour consistently and positively and staff offer frequent praise and encouragement.

Leadership and management are generally good. Staff work well as a team, and have attended a variety of training courses. However, not all staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and there is no clear system for staff appraisal and identification of future training needs. Space within the setting has been restricted due to its temporary location, but has not been best utilised by the staff to encourage children's independence and their access to resources.

Partnership with parents is generally good. There is a strong and supportive committee and parents help out during sessions. They receive regular information about the provision and their child's care and routines and are able to discuss their child's progress with staff, but they are not given sufficient opportunities to contribute to their child's learning.

What is being done well?

- Children are confident, behave well and have good relationships with adults and their peers. They are excited, eager to learn and settle down well to activities.
- Children are provided with frequent opportunities to explore and investigate, and they show an interest in why things happen and how things work e.g. the school caretaker was invited into the group to help with a musical instrument making activity, and he showed the children the tools in his toolbox, and discussed how to use them safely. Children were fascinated and asked lots of questions and related discussions to things they knew from experiences at home.

- Children have daily opportunities to sing simple songs, join in with nursery rhymes, action songs and use musical instruments. They listen to music from around the world and join in with musical activities with enthusiasm.
- Fine manipulative skills are developing well with regular use of tools and small equipment e.g. scissors, child sized hammers, hole punches and sewing needles.
- Staff are supported by a strong and active parent committee who meet regularly, share information with parents, review playgroup policies and procedures alongside staff and also organise the parent rota and regular outings.
- Strong links have been forged with the school in which the playgroup is based and older playgroup children are given opportunities to join in with school activities e.g. infant assembly.

What needs to be improved?

- the staff knowledge of the 'stepping stones' towards the early learning goals and their awareness of the objectives for individual children's learning within activity plans
- the further development of planning, observation and assessment methods
- the assessment of staff training needs
- the provision of more opportunities within everyday activities and routines for children to develop independence skills
- the organisation of space and availability of resources, including those that promote writing for a purpose, number recognition and, mathematical problem solving to enable children to independently select equipment, materials and activities.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting has made generally good progress since the last inspection.

The setting was asked to assess and record the children's progress towards the desirable learning outcomes and monitor the effectiveness of the system to ensure that records are manageable, can be used to plan the next steps in children's learning and identify the cause for concern. Settings no longer record children's progress to the desirable learning outcomes as these have been replaced by the 'stepping stones' towards the Early Learning Goals. A system, involving the observation and assessment of children's learning is currently being used but this is still under development.

They were also asked to develop the opportunities for children to learn the sounds that letters make and become more aware of sounds within words and rhymes and provide a variety of opportunities for children to practise their emerging writing skills by, for example, writing within their play and on their work. The playgroup plans a

range of activities to encourage letter and sound recognition including a 'letter of the week' and listening to poems and rhymes. They also provide a range of writing materials, opportunities within role play to practise emergent writing and encourage children to write their names on their creative work. However, the range of writing materials and the opportunities for children to access these resources and activities independently are currently limited.

They were also asked to provide more opportunities for children to respond in a variety of ways to a range of different types of music. This has been addressed by the purchase and frequent use of a variety of musical instruments and a tape player. The setting also plans for regular music and movement sessions and music is used to change the mood of children and indicate changes in the routine e.g. tidy up time.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have good relationships with adults and their peers and are happy and settled. Children demonstrate a sense of pride in their achievements and receive frequent praise and encouragement. Children behave well and show an awareness of rules and boundaries. Most children are confident and have a positive approach to new experiences, however, children's independence is limited due to the lack of opportunities for them to do things for themselves e.g. lay tables for snack.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Most children are confident speakers and are beginning to speak in turn and listen to others. Children enjoy listening to stories and some show an awareness of rhyme. Children are starting to link sounds to letters and can identify letters in their own name. Some children are beginning to write recognisable letters, whilst more able children are able to write their own names. However, resources in the writing area are limited and children have few opportunities to write for a purpose.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children confidently count by rote at register and anticipate how many will be left when singing familiar number rhymes. Most children can count reliably to five and some to ten. Opportunities for children to calculate through everyday activities are sometimes missed and children are not given regular access to resources to aid number recognition. Children confidently name two-dimensional shapes, recognise shapes in their environment, use size language and can compare objects by size and length.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children experience a wide range of activities to explore and investigate. They build with a variety of materials and confidently use tools and equipment. Children are developing a sense of past and present and go on frequent outings and walks in the local environment. Children do have access to information and communication technology but this is currently limited to one day a week. They are becoming aware of their community and are learning about other cultures and beliefs.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are developing skills and confidence whilst engaging in physical activities both indoors and outside e.g. control and balance. However, some skills are not practised regularly and not all children are provided with sufficient challenge. They are learning the importance of staying healthy and the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. Children confidently use a range of small tools and equipment during such activities as sewing, making models and painting.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are provided with opportunities to experiment with different textures and to paint and draw. Children can name a variety of colours and they talk about their artwork with pride. They enjoy songs, listening and dancing to music and are able to regularly explore the sounds of different musical instruments. Opportunities for children to independently express their imagination and own ideas is hindered by limited available resources and a high level of adult interaction and intervention.

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

- Ensure all staff who present the Foundation Stage Curriculum are sound in their knowledge of the 'stepping stones' towards the early learning goals and are aware of the objectives for individual children's learning within activity plans.
- Continue to develop methods for planning, observation and assessment to ensure that information gathered from observations made by staff and from parents is used effectively to inform future planning, provide sufficient challenge for all children and update records of children's progress towards the early learning goals.
- Provide more opportunities within everyday activities and routines for children to develop independence skills and also develop the organisation of space and availability of resources, including those that promote writing for a purpose, number recognition, and mathematical problem solving to enable children to independently select equipment, materials and 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.