



**Office for Standards
in Education**

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 218111

DfES Number: 539789

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 02/11/2004
Inspector Name Elaine Poulton

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Castle Pre-School Playgroup
Setting Address Castle Primary School
 Mow Cop Road, Mow Cop
 Stoke-on-Trent
 Staffordshire
 ST7 4NE

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Gillian Power

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

Castle Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1996 and operates from one classroom in Castle County Primary School. It is situated in the rural area of Mow Cop in Staffordshire. A maximum of 12 children may attend the pre-school group at any one time. The pre-school group is open each weekday from 08:55 to 11:50 and 12:30 to 15:15 during school term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 11 children aged from 3 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school group currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and also has systems in place to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school group employ three staff. Two of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

How good is the Day Care?

Castle Pre-school Playgroup provides good quality care for children aged three to five years.

Staff have a good knowledge of the National Standards and they understand how to interpret them in the best interests of the children they care for. Management is very supportive of the group and encourage staff to attend appropriate training. Staff are committed to ensuring they keep updated with all new initiatives and most policies and procedures are in line with current legislation and regulations. Registers of attendance are maintained, but times of arrival and departure are not recorded accurately.

Staff pay good attention to health and safety and children are encouraged to practice good hygiene routines. There are effective procedures in place to ensure children

are safe and cared for according to parents' wishes, however the emergency medical advice consent form needs clarification. Staff plan learning opportunities and children are able to choose from a wide range of imaginative themes. The space and resources are utilised well to create a safe, stimulating environment for all the children. An effective keyworker system and clear daily routines encourage children's all round development and help them feel settled and confident. Adults join in and are interested with children's play. Children's behaviour is managed in a consistent way and good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded.

Staff and parents work well together and good relationships are being developed. Parents are well informed of their child's progress and relevant policies and procedures help to ensure children needs are met. Parent's comments are valued and encouraged.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable as there were no actions raised from last inspection.

What is being done well?

- Staff provide a warm, welcoming and friendly environment where time is taken to ensure that the children are happy and settled. They plan a wide range of experiences for children and children have free choice and access to a good range of toys and resources.
- Staff plan a broad range of activities and routines that benefit the children. They use a good range of imaginative ideas to stimulate children's interest. All children enjoy taking an active part in imaginative themes such as clay modelling, role-play and cooking.
- Children learn to share and take turns in their play and are good speakers and listeners. The group is lively and all children are actively involved in a range of purposeful routines and activities that support their care, learning and play.
- Staff arrange regular outings to places of interest, such as visits to nearby Mow Cop Castle and Hanley Hall that link into planned themes. All parents are invited to join in and be part of the children's learning.

What needs to be improved?

- the record of attendance.
- the emergency medical treatment and advice consent form.
- the arrangements to review policies and procedures and update as and where necessary.

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

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	Accurately record arrival and departure times of children staff and visitors to the pre-school group.
7	Clarify the emergency medical treatment and advice consent form.
14	Review policies and procedures and update as and where necessary, in line with revised National Standards and guidance.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Castle Pre-school Playgroup offers good quality provision overall which helps children to make generally good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and very good progress towards the early learning goals in the other five areas of learning.

Teaching is generally good. Staff have a good knowledge of the foundation stage and they plan an interesting and exciting range of practical activities which help children to learn. Staff manage children's behaviour well and set clear boundaries. Most activities are well time-managed and there is a good range of resources available to support children's learning in all areas. Staff have introduced a new system of assessment and they intend to use more regular observations to inform these. The challenges set for children are good, however the opportunities for more able children to independently select and use resources are limited. The setting has an effective system in place to provide good support to children with special needs.

Leadership and management are generally good. The group benefits from an experienced, supportive management structure and a committed staff group. They identify strengths and weakness and they evaluate their practice through appraisals and regular staff meetings. Monitoring the time allocated to activities is not always fully effective.

The partnership with parents is good and contributes towards children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are well informed about planned events and the children's learning. Children's progress in general is shared with parents and there are opportunities for parents to discuss issues with the key worker and arrangements are in place for parents to keep a copy of their child's assessment profile.

What is being done well?

- Children are interested and motivated to learn, they interact well with each other and staff. They are able to talk confidently at circle time and small group situations about things of interest to them.
- Staff interaction with children is good. They listen and talk to the children and engage in their play. They ask open-ended questions and offer children new vocabulary to explore their feelings and extend their learning.
- Staff make very good use of the local environment to help children explore the natural world, learn about people and places and become familiar with their immediate surroundings.
- Children are interested in the opportunities provided and have a positive approach to both staff led and child centred activities. Children enjoy their

sessions as a result of activities that staff present in an imaginative way. Resources are well utilized and there is a good range of activities that are purposeful and worthwhile, for example clay models of Mow Cop Castle.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to independently select and use appropriate resources and techniques to assemble and join materials.
- opportunities for children to complete activities and the methods to inform children of time available to complete tasks.
- recording of observations in the new assessment profile as children play and work.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are involved in their play and are interested in visitors to the group. They are very confident and lively and express their feelings well. They are familiar with routines and are learning to form good relationships with one another and staff. Through story-time and use of puppets children are able to discuss concepts such as conscience and hence are learning what's right from wrong. Children are developing an understanding of their own community and other people's cultures.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children interact with others and initiate and continue conversations, most speaking clearly and listening with interest. Children are beginning to understand that print carries meaning and they handle books with care. Children see labels on friezes and words in displays within the setting. They find their name cards and most are attempting to sign-in, writing their own names with support from their parents. Children are linking initial sound with letters. They enjoy familiar stories and songs.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are learning to count reliably up to 10 and beyond through singing number songs and playing imaginative number games. They are able to recognise numerals during circle time and are beginning to notice and find numbers and corresponding symbols. Children are learning about shape and size through practical activities. They are talking about patterns, exploring shapes and learning about sequencing. Children's understanding of addition and subtraction is developing.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use all of their senses to explore the environment. They are knowledgeable and interested in their community and are developing investigation skills finding out about past and present day toys. They are using IT equipment with growing confidence and can complete basic programmes with adult support. Children are beginning to learn about other cultures through worthwhile activities. Some opportunities to independently select and use techniques to assemble and join materials are limited.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children move with control and coordination of their bodies. They are gaining confidence with malleable materials such as clay and handle a range of tools and small equipment competently. Children enjoy running and chasing games and pedal and push along wheeled toys with delight. Children take an active part in physical play and are beginning to learn about the importance of staying healthy and that changes happen to their bodies when they are active.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore texture in sand, water, clay and cooking activities. They have good opportunities to learn about music and different sounds musical instruments make. They take part in movement to music and learn basic yoga. They engage others in imaginative role-play in the castle with knights in armour. They are learning to express their feelings well and discuss what they think might happen next in certain situations.

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

- increase the challenges for more able children to independently select and use appropriate resources and techniques to assemble and join materials and to take initiative and become more self sufficient
- promote effective use of allotted time for planned and routine activities, and introduce methods to inform children of the time that is left available to complete tasks
- further develop the assessment process and continue to monitor the effectiveness of the funded nursery education. Share the new assessment profiles with parents.

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.