



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 109864

DfES Number: 523383

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 03/03/2004
Inspector Name Louise, Caroline Bonney

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name HAPPY FACES PLAYGROUP
Setting Address Liddell Hall
Old Reading Road, Sherfield-on-Loddon
Hook
Hampshire
RG27 0EZ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Happy Faces Playgroup 1029688

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Happy Faces Playgroup
Address u/a
u/a

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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

Happy Faces Playgroup opened in 1982. It operates from a room at the community hall in the village centre. The group serves surrounding villages and towns.

There are currently 51 children from 2 years 9 months to under 5 years on roll. This includes 34 funded three year olds, and 5 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children who have special needs, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00 each day, and additionally from 12:30 until 15:00 on Tuesday and Thursday. Only children in their final year attend Thursday afternoon sessions, and bring a packed lunch.

There are nine part-time staff working with the children. Four have early years qualifications, one is currently on a training programme. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership through attending cluster group meetings with local schools and preschools. Support and advice is also received from the Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and Portage.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff develop excellent relationships with the children, and provide a good range of activities indoors and outdoors. Resources are of good quality and children select from those set out by staff. Staff develop children's language well, they talk to them about their interests and activities, and question them to help develop their ideas and understanding.

Staff observe and record the children's progress towards the stepping stones, but do not sufficiently evaluate it. This leads to the record not providing a secure basis on which to plan the next steps in children's learning. Planning does not link sufficiently to the early learning goals, which leads to lack of challenge in aspects of mathematics. Very good support is given to children with special needs, and staff have high expectations of children's behaviour, and build their self-esteem and confidence well.

Leadership and management is generally good. The committee and staff have clearly understood roles. The team collaborates well, with all staff attending half-termly planning meetings. They evaluate the activities and provision and instigate changes promptly, such as purchasing poncho's to enable all-weather use of outdoors. There is no system in place to monitor teaching or appraise staff, and to effectively ensure professional development.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents receive very good written information about the provision, and have access to clear policies. They know the activities on offer to the children through the day board, and talk to staff at the end of the session. There is no formal system for sharing children's play plans and assessments, although they are available on request. Parents and carers are welcome to attend sessions as helpers or serve on the committee.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. They are confident, and develop trusting relationships with the staff and each other.
- Children behave well, and show clear understanding of the rules, such as putting on a band when in the playhouse to restrict numbers. Staff praise and encourage children, and children respond well to the high expectations of behaviour.
- Staff use outside area daily to provide children with good opportunities to exert themselves physically and keep fit. The provision of ponchos means

that children can now play outside, even when raining.

- Staff support children well in the book corner, where they help them develop a love of stories and books.
- Children enthusiastically join in drama sessions, which build on their experiences and encourage them to express themselves through gestures and expressions.
- Very good support given to children with special needs; they enjoy participating in all activities. Staff liaise closely with parents, share specialists reports, and provide additional adult support. Staff share termly play plans with parents. Excellent verbal feedback is given by staff, to parent/carer, at the end of the session.

What needs to be improved?

- children's assessments against stepping stones to be supported with evidence, to provide secure basis on which to plan the next steps in children's learning
- planning to provide more detail to support staff in delivering the early learning goals, particularly calculation in mathematics and how activities can be extended
- sharing of children's assessment records and play plans with parents so that they can be involved in their children's learning
- monitoring and appraisal of staff, to support professional development.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The playgroup has made limited progress in addressing two of the key issues raised at the last inspection, and generally good improvement in two key issues.

They were to improve equality and opportunity through finding ways that will encourage boys to write. Staff now provide a better variety of role play which boys enjoy taking part in, and provide writing materials more regularly to support role play. They were to increase opportunities to record observations in knowledge and understanding of the world. Children now record some observations through activities such as making charts to show how they travel to playgroup, daily completion of the weather chart, mapping activities, craft activities, which reflect festivals and nature.

The playgroup was to improve methods to assess the children, and to help them plan extension activities and provide challenge. Improvement to assessment records has been made, which now show children's progression through the stepping stones. These lack detail to show how evaluations are made to provide secure basis for future planning and extension of activities. Written plans still do not show learning outcomes, except for afternoon preschool session, or possible extension of activities. The playgroup was to share assessment records and ask parents to

contribute to them. Parents now complete a child profile when first joining, which the group keeps with the children's assessment records. Parents receive information about the records held, but are not encouraged to contribute to or read them.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Staff who are sensitive to their needs and know them well builds up children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are independent in self-care and some persist well at difficult tasks. They select their activities from resources set out, and additional resources are available on request. They develop good relationships with each other and staff, and often talk about home and families, and bring in items from home to 'show and tell'. Children behave well, and know to share and take turns.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children communicate confidently with staff, and ask for their needs. They recall events and know that print carries meaning. Staff write captions on their drawings and refer to lists supporting their activity. Children enjoy books, but group story times can become too long due to discussion. Some children recognise and match sounds at the beginning of words. They use emergent writing and some can write their names clearly. There are not always opportunities to write for a practical purpose.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have good opportunities to count and some recognise numerals up to six. They can predict the next number after two when guessing the date. Staff and children use simple mathematical language throughout activities relating to size, shape and position. Staff do not encourage children to do simple calculation, and there are limited opportunities to learn about capacity, volume and weight through use of materials such as sand and water.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children explore and investigate as they study the weather daily at circle time, or watch changes to snow when brought indoors, and grow seeds. They use a variety of natural materials for practical activities and show curiosity in the world around them, and excitedly run to look over the wall at the dog on the common. Children are not able to freely access materials to construct for their own purposes. They learn about each other's cultures through planned themes and practical activities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Staff plan a comprehensive programme of physical exercise, when children enthusiastically practice a wide range of movements. They daily use the outdoor play area, increasingly in all weathers, although they do not have free access. They use a good variety of large equipment to climb, pedal and slide. Children peg their work together, and use pencils, scissors, and glue spreaders with increasing control. They capably take care of their personal hygiene, with staff on hand to give support.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children use their imagination in an interesting variety of role-play situations. They sit in the home corner, prepare tea, ring their friends and look after the baby. They explore textures and colours through painting and craft activities, and the use of natural materials, such as snow. Staff encourage them to use facial expressions and gestures to express themselves during story time and drama activities. Children enthusiastically join in singing favourite rhymes.

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

- evaluate children's development to provide a clear picture of their progress to share with parents, and a secure basis on which to plan for their next stage of learning
- develop planning to provide sound basis for delivery of the early learning goals, particularly in aspects of mathematics, and show possible extension of activities
- develop system to monitor teaching and appraise staff, and support their professional 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.