



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 146751

DfES Number: 530669

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 22/06/2004
Inspector Name Susan Tuffnell

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Playbox Playgroup
Setting Address Hitchin Christian Centre
Bedford Road
HITCHIN
Hertfordshire
SG5 1HF

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Playbox Playgroup 1005126

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Playbox Playgroup
Address Hitchin Christian Centre
Bedford Road
Hitchin
Hertfordshire
SG5 1HF

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

Playbox Playgroup opened in October 1992. It operates in a purpose built unit within Hitchin Christian Centre, Bedford Road, Hitchin. The group serves the local area.

There are currently 36 children from 2 years to 5 year on roll. This includes 34 funded three-year-olds and 2 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are no children attending who have special needs and the group does not have any children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 4 days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09:15 am until 12:15 pm. There are eight staff working with the children. Three staff have early years qualifications and three staff are currently on training programmes.

The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)

How good is the Day Care?

Playbox Playgroup provide good care for children.

The environment is brightly decorated, welcoming, clean and well maintained.

Management and staff have relevant training, qualifications and experience to ensure the efficient running of the playgroup.

There is an effective operational plan with good policies and procedures and clear guidelines for staff.

Staff are skilful in observing, recording and planning the next stage of the children's development. There is excellent planning for a stimulating range and balance of activities and children are involved and interested in their play. However, children do not often use books independently and space in the book corner is minimal.

Children are motivated, busy and generally well behaved.

There is an abundance of suitable, good quality equipment and toys, sufficient play materials encourage challenge and investigation by the children.

The staff have a very good awareness of health and safety. Risk assessments are conducted and reviewed regularly.

Children learn about personal hygiene through the daily routine and staff encourage and support the development of children's independent skills.

Staff actively encourage equality of opportunity. They plan appropriate and interesting activities and are good role models for the children.

The playgroup promotes the inclusion of all children.

Nominated staff have knowledge and experience to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice (2002). There is a good written statement shared with parents of children with special needs. There is a member of staff trained in child protection procedures but the child protection policy does not refer to the Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

The staff work closely with parents and the exchange of information is varied and frequent. Parents are given every opportunity to be involved in all aspects of their child's development and progress.

Documentation is comprehensive and stored in a confidential manner.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the group agreed to provide a system for maintaining a written record, signed by parents of medicines given to children, devise a system of making special dietary requirements readily available to those who need to know, ensure that the child protection procedure complies with local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures, ensure that a system is provided for obtaining written permission from parents before administering medication to children and ensure that an adequate temperature is maintained.

Medication forms are now kept in a specific folder with very clear procedures taken, a large notice is displayed in the kitchen regarding special dietary needs, the child protection policy has been re-written taking information from booklet, medication forms have been printed with specific information of times, dosage and medication and there is a thermometer in the room.

What is being done well?

- Children are involved and interested in their play, they enjoy music and movement, listening to the taped instructions and supported by staff. The children are confident using a range of movement to practise balancing, hopping and skipping. The activity demands concentration and listening skills

to stop and start moving as instructed and most children master this well.

- There is excellent planning for a stimulating range and balance of activities. Children have the choice of a large variety of activities. A child at the clay table was engrossed in the texture and feel of the clay, he broke off small pieces and rolled them in his fingers to make long strips which he lined up in a container. Two children worked together constructing a building using a variety of different shaped blocks. They manipulated the blocks to build walls and selected different pieces in order to balance the model.

What needs to be improved?

- the book corner
- child protection policy

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
3	encourage children's independent regular use of books
4	organise space to allow sufficient room in the book corner
13	ensure the child protection policy is based on the Area Child Protection Committee procedures (ACPC)

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision of nursery education at Playbox playgroup is good. Children make good progress towards the Early Learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development and generally good progress in communication, language and literacy, physical development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Teaching methods recognise children's abilities and challenge children appropriately in most areas. Records reflect high expectations of children.

There is an effective use of time and resources to encourage children's independence. Staff develop children's personal, social and emotional development well, they use open-ended questions and extend learning by linking subjects to stimulate children's imagination. Children are progressing well in mathematical development and are becoming confident and competent in using key skills.

Staff give individual children a good level of support. They skilfully develop children's conversation skills by maintaining dialogue and asking questions to extend their thinking. Group activities are presented in an enthusiastic and lively manner but are not always extended to provide sufficient challenge, particularly in language and literacy and creative development. Staff help children develop a sense of the wider world but resources are limited

in information and communication technology.

Leadership and management is strong and has a very positive impact on children's progress. The manager gives excellent guidance and support to the staff. They work hard to achieve their aims and to provide good quality care and education for the children.

Partnership with parents is very good. Information sharing is comprehensive, of high quality and available to all parents. Children's progress is recorded to a high standard and shared with parents. The group welcome all families.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is progressing well, children are making connections between different parts of life experience, a story told by a child included family members, a holiday and her experience of seeing a large crab. She described the crab using words and pincher-like gestures to indicate claws.
- Shapes and patterns are being used to represent concepts, the square and triangle was put together to represent a house and patterns made by using

coloured dots were joined up to form diagonal lines on paper.

- Children have their own photo album which contains family photographs and baby pictures. Children talk about the "here" and "now" and describe events from the past showing an interest in the lives of people familiar to them and developing a sense of time and space.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to show an interest in ICT and other technology
- children's interest in illustration and print in books
- children's interest in songs, poems and rhymes
- opportunities for children to explore sound

What has improved since the last inspection?

This is Playbox Playgroup's first inspection for funded 3 and 4 year olds.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are secure and confident and have a good sense of belonging. They are making friends, co-operative play is now emerging strongly such as roll play in the home corner and working together on construction. Children demonstrate pride in their achievements and have a positive approach to new experiences especially in creative activities that involve some exploration and challenge. Children show a keen sense of right and wrong and are beginning to show care and concern for others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers and listeners, they communicate well on a one-to-one level with adults and children. Children explore situations, for example the topic "travelling to the moon" and use vocabulary to describe family holidays and personal experiences. Opportunities for joining in with stories, poems and rhymes are limited and children are showing little interest in illustrations and print in books.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are showing a natural interest in numbers, measuring and shape. Child orientated activities such as pattern forming with coloured dots and using shapes to represent objects are spontaneous. Children are using mathematical language in play such as 1 more plate in the home corner and sorting objects in colour sequence. There are opportunities for children to count, such as "count down" rocket launch, counting children, plates and cups at snack time and number rhymes and songs.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have opportunities to explore and investigate natural materials. They show curiosity in fruit printing, overlapping colours and mixing paint on paper. Dinosaurs hidden in the sand tray were built sand beds and "put to bed". Children are showing interest in how things work and 2 children successfully mastered the technique of using the hole punch, lining up paper and manipulating the apparatus, however there are limited opportunities for using simple equipment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children negotiated space well in music and movement, they moved around the room with pleasure and confidence, practising skills such as balancing, jumping and hopping. Children used 3 wheeled trikes, they peddled around a one way system, avoiding collisions and stopping and starting confidentially. They display awareness of personal hygiene and are competent washing hands and using tissues. Good hand-eye skills are shown using stamps, writing materials and scissors.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are involved in interesting creative activities, they explored a range of textures and shapes in the mystery tray activity and used prediction to guess what items were missing. They build 3 dimensional structures and make sand patterns with fingers. Children express and communicate ideas, joining with others to discuss and find items to "take to the moon". Opportunities for children to join in favourite songs and use musical instruments are limited.

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

- provide opportunities for children to use ICT and other technology, and to show an interest in illustration and print in books
- encourage children's interest in songs, poems and rhymes and provide opportunities for children to explore sound.

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.