



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 103847

DfES Number: 582743

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 03/02/2005
Inspector Name Vanessa Wood

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St Mark's Playgroup
Setting Address The Old Vicarage
Vicarage Road
Gillingham
Kent
ME7 5JA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of St Mark's Playgroup

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Mark's Playgroup
Address The Old Vicarage, Vicarage Road
Gillingham
Kent
ME7 5JA

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

St Mark's Playgroup opened in 1983 and operates from two rooms in a church hall situated in the urban town of Gillingham. Children have access to an adjacent garden area in the grounds owned by St Mark's church.

A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:30 until 12:15 for 39 weeks of the year.

There are currently 28 children aged from 2 years to 5 years on roll. Of these 25 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The playgroup supports one child with special educational needs and three children who have English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs seven staff. Six staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St Mark's Playgroup is acceptable and is of high quality overall. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a thorough understanding of the foundation stage and plan practical activities that challenge all children. They plan well balanced activities for children to practise previously acquired skills and help them to develop new ones. There is an effective balance of adult directed and child initiated activities in all areas of learning. Staff explain activities clearly and use open questions that encourage children to think. Relationships with children are positive, with staff using praise and encouragement to promote children's self esteem and good behaviour. Staff support children with special educational needs well. Staff assess children's learning against the stepping stones and early learning goals and use this information to plan what children should do next. Activities are evaluated and recorded well and information is used to inform future planning. Plans show how activities will be expanded for more able children.

The leadership and management of the playgroup is very good. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities within the setting and work well together as a team. Staff are committed to providing a high standard of education and teaching practice is reviewed on a regular basis. Organisation and deployment of staff is good to ensure children are supported in their play.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are given regular information about the playgroup through newsletters and all information is shared. Parents are kept informed of the assessments staff keep on their child's development and are invited to discuss their child's progress with staff.

What is being done well?

- Staff have a clear understanding of the curriculum for the foundation stage and the quality of teaching is good.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides challenge for all children. Staff promote children's learning by providing good practical activities. There is a balance of adult directed and child initiated activities.
- Staff use successful strategies to promote good behaviour and consideration for others. They give children clear instructions and help them understand the impact of unacceptable behaviour on others.
- Staff support children with special educational needs well. They are sensitive to the needs of all children.
- Partnership with parents is strong. Staff foster a good relationship with parents and all information is shared.

What needs to be improved?

- the daily plans, by ensuring there is enough space to show differentiation of activities and the evaluation of activities.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection when staff were asked to address three key issues about planning, training in early years and for staff to become familiar with the Code of Practice for children with special educational needs.

Effective long term and short term plans are now in place and clearly show how the early learning goals and stepping stones will be met. Assessment records give a clear picture of how children are progressing and includes space for parents to comment.

Staff have attended early years training and six members of staff now have early years qualifications.

One member of staff has attended the required special educational needs training.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children can choose from a wide range of activities which has a positive impact on their motivation to learn. They work together cooperatively when it is time to help to tidy up. Children learn about the need for simple rules and the importance of sharing and taking turns. Their behaviour is good and they are encouraged to use good manners. Children are encouraged to be independent in all things and they freely choose resources and take care of their personal needs.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are developing good speaking and listening skills. Regular discussions with staff enable children to talk about their ideas and experiences. A good emphasis is placed on encouraging children to use and enjoy books with the use of a soft area in the small room. Children have opportunities to practise writing for a variety of purposes and to understand the meaning of print. Children recognise their name and have an understanding of the sound of letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children confidently count and recognise numbers that are important to them. They chose number activities during free play and enjoy number rhymes and songs. Children are beginning to understand the concept of additions and subtraction. They can say what is one more or one less and solve practical problems through daily routines. Children's understanding of space, shape and measure is developing well. They recognise simple shapes and make simple patterns.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children demonstrate excellent cutting and joining skills. They select and use appropriate materials and tools competently to create individual construction models. Children learn about their environment through project work on safety. They look at people in the community whose job it is to help in an emergency. Children are beginning to understand past and present. They discuss their families and events that take place and recognise photographs of themselves and friends at playgroup.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children move confidently and in a variety of ways and respond and move enthusiastically to music. They have the opportunity of using large equipment such as the climbing frame and to throw and catch balls and bean bags. Children's fine motor skills are developing well. They are competent when selecting and using small tools such as scissors, glue sticks and paintbrushes. Children understand the importance of keeping healthy through topic work.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children use their senses to explore and describe experiences such as tasting and smelling food, listening to music and playing with sand and water. Children enjoy music and respond well during music sessions and they have the opportunity to use musical instruments. Children use their imagination well, particularly when acting out well known scenarios and stories during role play. Children express themselves creatively through a range of mediums. They paint, draw and make collages.

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:
- continue to develop the daily plans to ensure there is enough space to fully record the differentiation and the evaluation of 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.