



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 203940

DfES Number: 580691

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	18/11/2004
Inspector Name	Chris Gregson

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Layer Preschool
Setting Address	Queen Elizabeth Hall New Cut, Layer-de-la-Haye Colchester Essex CO2 0JU

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Layer Pre-School 1055207
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Layer Pre-School
Address	Queen Elizabeth Hall New Cut, Layer-de-la-Haye Colchester Essex CO2 0JU

## 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

Layer Pre-school opened in 1972 and operates from one room in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Layer-de-la-Haye. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open from 09.00 to 11.50 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and from 09.00 to 15.10 on Tuesday and Thursday during term time.

There are currently 52 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 34 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and would support children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six staff. There are two members of staff, including the supervisor, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two members of staff working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

### How good is the Day Care?

Layer Pre-school provides satisfactory care for children.

Policies and procedures keep parents and staff informed of the expectations of the committee, but these need updating and there is no operational plan in place giving fuller information of the day-to-day running of the pre-school. The key staff are suitably qualified, some staff are on training and other staff have identified their future training needs. Children have access to child-sized furniture so they can play and eat during their time at the pre-school. But, rest facilities, especially after lunch, are limited for full day care and toys and other equipment need maintaining.

Staff are aware of health and safety and encourage and use good hygiene practice. They know how to deal with minor accidents or a child who becomes ill during the day. Information about diet and allergies is effectively used though drinks are not

freely available. Staff know about, and parents are informed of, procedures for the protection of children. Staff attend short courses to support children who need extra help, working with parents and other professionals. Staff know children and use information from parents to care for the individual child.

Staff are skilled at caring and settling young children into the group. The key worker system ensures staff observe and record children's development. Staff plan some interesting activities. They ask questions to make children think Behaviour management is satisfactory, although some children find whole group activities a difficult time and become understandably disruptive.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff are very friendly and keep parents informed of their child's time at the group. A welcome pack informs prospective parents about the pre-school. The committee value parents' views and actively uses questionnaires to seek their opinion.

### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to provide and update paperwork including some policies, notify Ofsted of staff changes, obtain permission from parents where needed, provide appropriate public liability insurance and ensure hot water is available for hand washing.

The pre-school sought advice to update the paperwork, however, the action to provide an operational plan and update the policies remains an issue. The system to record the times that children and staff are present has just been updated to show times of arrival and departure so that there is an accurate record of persons on the premises.

Ofsted are notified of staff working with children to ensure they are vetted and records of their details kept on the premises, to protect the children. A risk assessment of the premises has been carried out to ensure hazards for children are minimised and the public liability insurance certificate is displayed on the notice board.

A sickness and medication policy now protects children from disease. The permission to give medication was not fully carried out, although there is a system in place asking parents to complete an administered medication form including 'parent's instruction', but nowhere gives permission to administer medication. This has now been rectified with the addition of the word 'permission' being added to the form. Hot water is now available for hand washing to ensure good hygiene practice for children and staff.

### **What is being done well?**

- Staff are very kind, caring and supportive to the children. A new starter or very young child is helped to settle into the pre-school. There are lots of cuddles and reassuring touches to comfort children who are finding it hard to part from their parent.

- Staff work very well as a team and support each other, being good role models for the children. They are enthusiastic and enjoy working with the children.
- Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. They have written information available to remind them of the signs and symptoms. The welcome pack contains information for parents to explain the requirements of staff working in day care.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- operational plan
- organisation of the session as younger children not always able to concentrate or join in for the required period. Staff do not offer alternative activities, which often leads to disruption
- rest facilities for full day care
- maintenance of toys and equipment. This refers to the safety mats and tunnel
- fire drills for every child and member of staff
- operational procedures for outings
- permission to administer medication
- fresh drinking water at all times
- special educational needs statement to reflect the very good practice in the group
- details of Ofsted in the written complaints statement so parents have details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint, including the address and telephone number of the regulator
- full information about roles and responsibilities of the committee and volunteers
- child protection statement clearly stating contact names and telephone numbers of local police and social services department. It should include the procedures to be followed in event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer.

#### **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 must take the following actions by the date shown

Std	Action	Date
2	Provide an operational plan that is updated and in line with current legislation. This should show how the pre-school operates, staff are deployed, how and what activities will be provided and how the continuing training needs of staff will be met.	22/12/2004

### The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
2	Organise whole group activities so that children can fully participate, or for those who opt out, ensure that alternative suitable activities are available or the grouping of the children is reorganised to provide a richer experience.
4	Ensure provision is made for children to relax, play quietly or sleep, equipped with appropriate furniture when children are present for the all day session.
5	Ensure that toys and equipment are well maintained and safe.
6	Review fire procedure and ensure that it conforms to Fire Safety Officer recommendations.
8	Ensure fresh drinking water is available for children at all times.
14	Update documentation. (This refers to operational procedures for outings, the statements for special educational needs, child protection, complaints procedure and information and guidance for volunteers and committee members.)

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Layer Pre-school provides good quality nursery education overall enabling children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development though there are significant weaknesses in the other two areas.

The quality of teaching has some significant weakness, though there are some good aspects. Staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage is limited, but they really know the children and are skilled at developing children's confidence and their ability to talk and listen. Staff form very good relationships with the children, but the child's independence is limited. Staff praise and divert children into activities to manage behaviour.

Staff work very well together as a team and have meetings to plan topic activities, but the plans are extremely limited in detail and not in line with the Foundation Stage. Sessions for funded children have a limited range of

play activities, demonstrating little understanding of how children learn in early years. Staff observe and record children's progress in notebooks and use this to write assessment records. However, there is no link to the stepping stones and early learning goals.

Leadership and management of the pre-school nursery have significant

weaknesses. Although the voluntary committee supports training, the limited training and qualifications of staff reflect in many aspects. The supervisor encourages staff to bring in new ideas. There are staff appraisals, and staff are now planning future training but no overall evaluation is made of the setting to ensure effectiveness and quality.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Staff tell parents of children's progress through daily chats and through a written termly report. Parents are informed of the topics in newsletters. But, parents receive limited information about the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals.

### What is being done well?

- Children have a lot of opportunities to hear letter sounds as staff skilfully remind children of the initial letter in their name card. They sound letters at many other times during the session, enabling children to hear, and become familiar with, these sounds before they are ready to use them.
- Good links with the local primary school prepare children for school. The older children have opportunities to play with the infants in the school

playground during the school playtime. The reception teacher visits the pre-school a few weeks before the end of term, building a bridge between the pre-school and school to make the transition easier.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- children's independence at selecting resources and activities to promote their independent learning
- opportunities for children see an environment rich in language and literacy through the labelling on displays around the nursery
- children's access to the book area so children are encouraged to use a range of books including reference books to seek information about their interests or topic activities
- children's access to information technology
- information about other cultures and beliefs outside their immediate experience to develop understanding and respect for others
- more opportunities to hear and appreciate a range of music and use musical instruments
- a range of resources and opportunities to mark-make and practise mathematical concepts to support their learning in the home corner through imaginative play
- staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, particularly how to use the stepping stones to plan meaningful, practical play activities appropriate for early years and to assess children's progress using the stepping stones
- planning to show learning intentions, details of the activity, resources needed, the role of the adult, vocabulary or questions to extend learning and differentiation in grouping of the children
- information for parents about the Foundation Stage, six areas of learning, early learning goals and the stepping stones to include how children learn through meaningful, practical play activities
- a system to monitor the quality of teaching and overall provision of nursery education.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Poor progress has been made in implementing the action plan drawn up to address the three key issues identified at the previous inspection resulting in few improvements being made to the educational programme.

Parents receive information, half termly, about the topics with a brief description of the activities planned indicating which area of learning it covers. However, this is limited to the area being written, in brackets, without any fuller information about the

six areas of learning being made available. A parent's video of the Foundation Stage is available, but has not been used to share with, or inform, parents of how children learn. This remains a key issue.

There is no evidence of a system to ensure all aspects of the six areas of learning are regularly and consistently covered. This remains a key issue.

Staff have devised a system to monitor and record children's progress by using their individual notebooks to record observations. These are transferred to skeleton assessment records and used to produce termly reports under the headings of the six areas of learning. However, the assessment records are not linked to the early learning goals and do not show all aspects of learning. This remains a key issue.



## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are very confident and concentrate at activities, such as making masks. They loudly express their own needs and feelings. They share and take turns at board games and play happily together at the castle or dolls house. Children have limited opportunities to be independent. They develop an understanding and respect for their own community, staying for lunch, visiting school and taking part in the Christmas concert for parents.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are confident communicators through gesture and words. They listen to stories and story tapes using finger puppets to provide interest. They talk, listen in turn, hold conversations with staff and each other and use words to describe their play. Children enjoy the sounds of rhyming words, enthusiastically sing songs and hear and know letter sounds. They know how to hold books, but do not use the book area. They competently draw circles, mark make and begin to write their names.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are good at counting and recognising numbers as staff count with them at every opportunity, play number board games, count spots on the dog at story time and show the date at carpet time. They know the next number and learn to add and take away in practical activities, such as how many pieces needed to win at lotto. They learn about shape and position, turning a jigsaw piece round till it fits. They use some mathematical language for position or size and weigh ingredients.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children observe nature around them during walks in the wood. They plant seeds and talk about the life cycle of a caterpillar. They build with construction toys and stick craft materials on paper. But, the use of recycled materials is limited. There is little evidence of learning about everyday, and information, technology. Children confidently talk about their pets, families and past events, such as holidays. Activities to help understanding of other cultures and beliefs are very limited.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children move confidently around the hall. They climb up and slide down the small plastic slide and crawl through the tunnel. They walk along the lines on the hall floor and staff help them to do somersaults along a mat. They line up and take turns hopping across the hopscotch mat. Children know when they are hot or hungry, showing an awareness of their body. They shape and mould clay, play dough and gingerbread dough with their hands and small tools. Outside play is very limited.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
	Staff provide interesting and exciting opportunities for children to mix powder paints, sponge print, roller paint, stick sequins and glitter to paper, for example when making animal masks. Children enthusiastically sing, but opportunities to hear music and play instruments are limited. They use their imagination in the home corner and when drawing and painting. Topic work enables them to experience their senses, for example enjoy the feel of paint on their hands, but this is limited.

**Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is not 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**

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the Foundation Stage, to enable them to produce plans that provide a broad and balanced curriculum covering all areas of learning, using appropriate methods to teach these children
- ensure information for parents includes details of the Foundation Stage, the six areas of learning and the early learning goals
- develop assessment records to clearly show a child's progress through the stepping stones and identify their next steps. Share these with parents so that they can contribute to these and help plan for the child's next step
- devise and implement a robust system to monitor the quality of teaching and the nursery education programme to ensure all aspects are met in each area of learning.

*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.*