



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127462

DfES Number: 519313

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 23/03/2004  
Inspector Name Jane Wakelen

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name Poplar Pre-School  
Setting Address Giddyhorn Lane Pavillion  
Poplar Grove, Allington  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME16 0DE

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Poplar Pre-school

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Poplar Pre-school  
Address Giddyhorn Lane, Allington  
Maidstone, Kent  
Maidstone  
Kent

## 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

Poplar Pre-school opened in 1975. The group has moved premises and operates in a pavilion in a residential part of Maidstone, adjacent to a playing field. The group operates in a large hall and has recently had an additional smaller hall built, to cater for the numbers of children. They have use of a cloakroom, kitchen and office. Children will be grouped by age between the two halls. Local amenities are within walking distance.

There are currently 63 children aged between two and half and five years on roll. This includes 45 funded three and four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports one child with special needs and one child with English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during term time only. Sessions are from 09:05 to 11:35 and 12:35 to 15:05. The older children bring a packed lunch and stay all day.

Eight staff work with the children. Four of these hold an early years qualification to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a teacher mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Provision is acceptable and of good quality. Children are making generally good progress towards the Early Learning goals, with very good progress in physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff organize a good range of activities both inside and outside, using well maintained equipment, and understand what children learn from them. They provide a welcoming environment, displaying children's work on the walls and help raise the children's self esteem through praise and encouragement. Staff present group activities in an interesting and enthusiastic way, but miss opportunities to extend children's knowledge through effective questioning and the use of visual aids connected with the topic. Planning is in place but is not effective in defining what the aim of the activity is and how the activity will be differentiated for the more able children. Staff observe the children using the early learning goals with the stepping stones, but assessment does not always provide evidence.

The leadership and management of the setting is very good. The committee have an active role in the organization of the pre-school and have successfully managed to increase the available space with the addition of a new hall. The supervisor provides a good role model for the staff and actively encourages them to undertake additional training to update their skills and knowledge. She is committed to the group and is regularly updating information and practice.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the pre-school, either serving on the committee or contributing their skills or knowledge to the group. Parents are involved in the fund raising and are invited along to the Easter and Christmas concerts. They are kept informed about the nursery topics through the planning web on the noticeboard and half termly information sheets.

### What is being done well?

- Children's physical skills are promoted through effective activities both indoors and outdoors.
- Children's knowledge and understanding about the world they live in is promoted through a range of practical activities, observing living things and topic work.
- Regular music and movement sessions are well paced and encourage children to develop their skills in sound patterns and listening to rhythm and beat.
- Relationships between staff, children and parents is good, which in turn helps children develop in confidence and build their self esteem.

**What needs to be improved?**

- the opportunities for children to develop their skills in forming and recognizing letters and familiar words
- the attention given to providing activities for children to recognize numbers, sort and group objects and through practical activities, learn about addition and subtraction
- the planning to include all areas of learning, ensuring that the learning objective is included for set activities, to ensure staff maximize opportunities for the more able children and to include the topic in several areas to develop children's knowledge

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

There has been limited improvement since the previous inspection. The group were recommended to alter their daily planning to indicate which adult was responsible for the different activities, and to ensure they understood what the children were to learn from the activity.

Staff are now directed to a particular activity and have a more secure understanding of the early learning goals, but do not always understand the aim or objective of the specific activity, therefore resulting in teaching opportunities being lost, and the more able children not extended.

The third and fourth issues were for the staff to identify and extend practical opportunities for children to recognize and use numbers up to ten, along with practical activities to promote addition and subtraction. Children now have the numbers one to ten on the wall, but they are not in line and are positioned up high. Staff still do not provide children with opportunities, through regular routines, to learn addition and subtraction.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children make generally good progress in this area. They form good relationships with adults and peers and are able to sit in large group sessions, showing concentration and interest. They are confident to offer ideas and suggestions to the whole group and enjoy working in a large group at music time. Children are not always encouraged to be independent such as pouring their own drinks and fetching their coats. Children behave well and learn to take turns and share.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children make generally good progress in this area. They are able to recognize some initial sounds of words and are beginning to recognize their name. Children show an interest in books and share with a friend, discussing the pictures and story. However, they are not sufficiently encouraged to notice print, or practise writing for a purpose in activities such as role play or topic work. Children listen and respond with enthusiasm to simple rhymes and songs.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children make limited progress in this area. They count one to ten at random times during the session and are encouraged to count the children during register time. However, they are offered limited opportunities to recognize number and gain an understanding of quantity. Children are able to name 2D shapes and colours but are not introduced to 3D objects and their names. Children sing simple number rhymes and sequence the days of the week through song.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress in this area. They talk about past and present experiences in group time, such as visiting the doctor's. They learn about the world they live in, studying living things, such as giant snails and use magnifying glasses to make observations. They use a variety of tools with wood and dough and use a range of resources to shape and join materials. Children study their own and others beliefs, learning about festivals such as Holi and Easter.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress in this area. They learn to control their bodies using large apparatus, such as the climbing frame, learning skills in climbing and balancing. They develop spatial awareness through sit and ride toys and tricycles, learning to manoeuvre around obstacles and each other. Children's fine motor skills are fostered through art activities and threading. They use scissors, pens, hammers and pegs with co-ordination and skill.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children make generally good progress in this area. They develop an understanding of rhythm through the introduction of musical instruments and the keyboard. They listen to sound patterns and can predict a song, listening to the first few notes. Children use their imagination in the role play area, with a variety of equipment, but staff miss opportunities to extend this area through poor use of resources and adult interaction. Children explore texture and colour through collage work.

**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**

- ensure daily plans include all areas of learning, with learning objectives listed for specific activities, to ensure adults maximize opportunities for children to extend their knowledge and the more able children to be challenged
- identify and offer daily opportunities for children to develop skills in letter and number formation. To use number in practical activities to increase children's understanding of number concepts and increase children's awareness of print, the sounds of letters and words and the different purposes of writing
- improve the use of visual aids, objects, books and posters in group activities to expand children's knowledge and help maintain their interest in topic work, ensuring that the topic encompasses most areas of the nursery planning

*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.*