



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 650048

DfES Number: 584478

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 10/01/2005
Inspector Name Lynn Clements

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Apple Tree Day Care Nursery
Setting Address 304 Crossing Road
Braintree
Essex
CM7 3PG

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Just Like Home Day Nurseries Ltd 05264863

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Just Like Home Day Nurseries Ltd
Address 300 Crossing Road
Braintree
Essex
CM7 3PG

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

Apple tree Day-care Nursery opened in 1997 and operates from a converted bungalow and mobile classrooms. There is a fully enclosed rear garden available for outside play. It is situated in a residential area of Braintree. A maximum of 51 children may attend the nursery at any one time, this includes 12 children who attend the after school club. The nursery is open each week day from 07:45 until 18:00 and the after school club provides care from 15:00 until 18:00 all year round.

There are currently 102 children on roll. Of these 39 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery has strategies in place to support children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 15 staff. Eight have early years qualifications including the manager and five are working towards recognised qualifications. The setting works closely with the local Early Years Child Care Partnership (EYDCP) and holds Pre-school Learning Alliance Accreditation (PSLA). The group also work closely with the Ethnic Minorities Services and the local Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Apple Tree Day Nursery is generally good. It enables children to make generally good progress in personal social and emotional, communication language and literacy and creative development and very good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn through play and first hand investigation. Planning procedures are currently being adapted to ensure all staff members become directly involved in children's learning. This will provide them with opportunities to discuss and implement an effective, exciting, varied and progressive learning environment. Key-workers balance a child led environment with more structured adult initiated learning. Attention to child accessible props and resources enables children to explore at their own pace. Children's behaviour is excellent and they respond well to the consistent and sensitive approach of staff.

Staff observe children and record their progress. They are beginning to identify children's next steps for learning. Provision for children who require extra support is very good. Sound strategies are in place to provide an inclusive environment which ensures children's interests remain paramount and enables them to make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Leadership and management is generally good. The recently appointed manager is working hard to develop a strong and positive staff team. Development plans are in place to ensure key-workers are supported and parental involvement in children's assessment records is instigated. Performance reviews draw out particular skills which are used to define roles and responsibilities of staff.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents share in their children's early experiences and initiatives, such as activity sheets and the nursery library, support direct participation.

What is being done well?

- Partnership with parents is very good. Staff encourage parental participation in their children's learning. Regular open evenings, newsletters and open communications provide parents with information regarding their child's development. The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world is very good. Staff organise activities and educational trips to support and extend previous learning experiences. Topics include artefacts and appropriate resources for children to investigate first hand. Computers, programmable toys and props help children explore communication technology.

- Children make very good progress in their physical development. Staff make excellent use of the outside play area. Children move freely both inside and out and their fine and gross motor skills are developed appropriately. Clear attention to defined play areas and activities ensures a free flow environment which supports children's exploration and play.
- Aspects of teaching, including the staff's commitment to continuing their professional development, is good. Regular training sessions and in-house consolidation ensures staff's knowledge and understanding remain up to date. In addition the proposed changes to planning systems will enable the nursery to provide a consistent approach to children's learning and progress.

What needs to be improved?

- increased opportunities to build on children's independence skills
- opportunities to use writing for a variety of purposes
- opportunities for direct parental participation and information sharing in their children's development records.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Progress since the last inspection has been generally good. Two areas for development were identified.

To develop the Foundation Stage curriculum for the funded children to ensure they make progress through the stepping stones. To develop assessment records to identify children's next steps for learning.

To develop the programme for knowledge and understanding of the world with regard to information technology enabling children to access the computer more easily.

Staff now use the Foundation Stage curriculum and senior staff are currently developing planning and assessment procedures to ensure key-workers clearly identify children's next steps for learning.

The nursery purchased a child height computer table and children access the computer in safety and comfort building their understanding and increasing their skills and competence.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are supported by caring and sensitive staff. Their confidence and self esteem are high. Children work in large and small groups and are encouraged to think for themselves, selecting activities and resources and taking care of their personal hygiene. Opportunities for children to build on specific skills, such as pouring their own drinks and preparing their snack are limited. High expectations and clear boundaries help children develop a clear understanding about right and wrong.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are keen to communicate verbally. They select information and story books holding them correctly and using the pictures as clues to the text. They are beginning to develop simple phonic knowledge investigating the letter and sound of the week and sounding out the letters on their names. Some children are beginning to form letters correctly. However, opportunities for older more able children to use writing for a purpose requires development. Children actively take part in stories.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children benefit from one to one and small group work when counting to 10 and beyond. They match and sort by colour, type, size and shape. They create simple repeating patterns when threading coloured cotton reels or when hand printing. They investigate capacity and quantity during sand and cookery activities. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of simple addition linked to one more and subtraction linked to one less, through number rhymes, songs and weighing activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Staff support children's investigation and understanding of similarities and differences between cultures and countries. They provide first hand learning experiences, such as planting seeds and observing changing seasons of the year. Educational trips enable children to discover the wider world around them. Children handle artefacts and resources and taste foods from around the world . They extend their understanding of technology and communications when using the computer and programmable toys.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children develop both fine and gross motor skills. They travel over under and through apparatus and used wheeled toys with confidence, co-ordination and control. Children's spatial awareness is good and they move around the nursery safely. They use small tools and cutlery with increasing control and competence. Children use malleable materials pulling, stretching and kneading. Staff support and develop children's hand eye co-ordination when throwing and catching using bats and balls.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their imagination. They sing simple songs and explore different sounds made by their own voices, animals, objects and vehicles. They create 2 and 3D collages, clay dishes and junk models using a variety of creative media. Children explore musical instruments and match movements to music. They use their senses to taste, touch and smell food, textures and textiles. Role play scenarios are currently being developed further.

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

- develop the programme for self care providing opportunities for children to pour their own drinks and prepare snacks enabling them to build on their personal independence
- develop the programme to use writing for different purposes, such as making lists and taking messages in role play scenarios. Encourage older and more able children to write captions on their work, building on their existing phonic knowledge
- provide opportunities for parental participation in their children's assessment records enabling them to share information with key-workers regarding their child's 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.