



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 203764

DfES Number: 512103

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 30/03/2004
Inspector Name Gillian Jefferson

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Little Hands Preschool Nursery
Setting Address Dengie Community Hall
Dengie Close
Witham
Essex
CM8 1DJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Little Hands Pre-School Nursery
Address Dengie Community Hall
Dengie Close
Witham
Essex
CM8 1DJ

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

Little Hands Pre-school Nursery opened in 1994. It operates from rooms within a community hall in the outskirts of Witham. The nursery serves the local and surrounding areas.

There are currently 56 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 7 funded three year olds and 15 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 14:45.

Thirteen part time and three full time staff work with the children. Six staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Three staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification and another staff member is intending to start training in the near future. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

How good is the Day Care?

Little Hands Pre-School provides good care for children aged two to under five years.

The group is efficiently organised and well run. They offer various sessions, meeting a range of needs, and building the children's confidence and independence in preparation for them joining school. The learning environment is bright and stimulating. The high staff ratio gives children an excellent amount of high quality interaction. The group are well on their way to achieving the requirement of 50% of staff having a level 2 qualification in early years. All staff are regularly involved in additional short courses and workshops to broaden their knowledge and expertise. All required documentation is in place, although some require more detail.

Children's welfare and safety is given high priority. Staff are active in their implementation of the policies and procedures, and are kept well informed about child care issues. The widespread use of small group and 1:1 interaction from staff enables all children's individual needs to be met, including those with special educational needs. Children learn about health and hygiene through the changing snack programme and their regular involvement in cookery activities.

Children are provided with diverse and exciting learning opportunities that promote their development in all areas of learning. They are encouraged to develop independence and gain high levels of self-esteem and confidence. Staff are skillful in questioning children to promote their learning. Children happily participate in activities to build on their skills. Good behaviour is encouraged and valued by staff.

The group work effectively in partnership with parents and carers. They have an open door policy for most sessions and give parents and carers regular informal feedback. A detailed developmental record is kept for each child and a wealth of information is made available through newsletters and notices.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the registered provider agreed to:

ensure that fresh drinking water is available at all times; make the outdoor play area safe; obtain and keep a fire log book and fire safety certificate; make the glass windows/doors safe or inaccessible to the children; plan a range of activities and play opportunities for children's overall development; and organise the resources so that they are readily accessible to the children.

All actions have been addressed:

A jug of water and cups are now readily accessible throughout each session.

The outdoor play space is now surrounded by a high level fence, making it safe and secure for the children.

A fire log book and fire safety certificate are now held by the group.

The glass windows/doors now meet the required safety standard and confirmation of this is etched on each pane.

A comprehensive range of activities and play opportunities is provided for children's overall development. The pre school sessions build on this introducing the children to more formal activities in a familiar and supportive environment to help prepare them for moving on to school.

Storage of a range of equipment in boxes under some of the large tables means that children are able to freely access resources to independently support and extend their learning and play.

What is being done well?

- Children's learning is promoted through the high quality interaction with staff. This is also supported by the high staff ratio operating within the group. The use of small group and 1:1 work further assists staff in meeting all the developmental needs of the children through focussed activities and questioning.
- The children's involvement in a dynamic programme of activities, and their access to a wide range of resources and equipment.
- A stimulating environment is provided for the children by creative use of banners to display children's artwork. Interest tables are used to capture their curiosity and encourage their development through investigation and exploration.
- The organisation and focus of the different sessions to meet the varying needs of the children. The pre school sessions provide opportunities for developing the children's confidence and familiarity with school style routines and activities.
- The staff's involvement in regular workshops and day courses to expand their skills and experience. This helps them support and progress the children's development according to their individual needs, including those with special educational needs.

What needs to be improved?

- details in the procedures for lost or uncollected children and the sick children 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
14	Expand the detail within the lost and uncollected children procedures and the sick children policy.

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 Little Hands Pre-School is of high quality overall. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Teaching is very good. A stimulating and inviting learning environment is created for the children. Staff skilfully support the children and promote their education through high quality interaction, questioning and the use of 1:1 work. The children's behaviour is very good in response to the modelling of staff and the positive reinforcement given. Their independence and confidence are fostered and their self-esteem enhanced by the importance placed on their individual achievements. The planning is thorough for all sessions. Clear links to the stepping stones, learning intentions and early learning goals are detailed within activity plans. Comprehensive developmental records are kept for each child, with duplicates for both parents and the school the children will go to, so all parties are well informed about each child's achievement.

Leadership and management are very good and a strength of the group. Staff have clear objectives and focus. They take on increasing responsibilities and are involved in the planning and record keeping. The delivery of a balanced and stimulating programme across the six areas of learning is carefully monitored. The successful induction of staff and their regular involvement in training ensures that they continually develop their skills to support the provision.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. They are given open access and encouraged to informally discuss their children's developmental progress. They can view their children's assessment records, though not all parents are aware of this. They are kept well informed by their involvement in supporting their children in finding objects linked to current topics for circle times or the interest table.

What is being done well?

- The staff's use of 1:1 and small group work to develop the children's learning and understanding, particularly for communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. This enables staff to adapt activities to meet all the children's needs, including special educational needs.
- Staff's skill in interaction and questioning the children to promote their learning. Staff show confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones and early learning goals. The children's learning within activities is therefore maximised and their interests capitalised on to enable intended learning outcomes to be achieved.
- Staff provide a comprehensive programme of stimulating and interesting activities across the curriculum. Children are making very good progress

through opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge across all six areas of learning.

- The staff and management work very well as a team. All staff know their specific roles and responsibilities and they work together to progress the children's learning. This is supported by their involvement in regular training to expand their skills.

What needs to be improved?

- information for parents and carers concerning children's individual records.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Little Hands Pre-School has made very good progress since the last inspection.

The point for consideration to continue to maintain the high standard of all aspects of their provision has been met and exceeded. There are further plans to expand the outdoor area and storage, and to provide more quiet activity space inside to improve the children's access to computers in all sessions.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children are confident, happy and enjoy participating in activities. They are eager to learn and be involved. They develop a high level of independence, and freely select their resources and equipment to support their learning. Children build strong friendships and are very sociable with each other, and with the staff. They have great care and compassion for others. They behave very well and develop a strong sense of community through the activity programme they are involved in.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy stories and books. They are developing their early reading skills, and are encouraged to take books home. They are confident in speaking and listening and have an ever expanding vocabulary. Children have a good understanding of the links between sounds and letters and recognise rhyme and rhythm in their speech. They have access to a wide range of activities to develop their hand-eye coordination. Children also given regular one to one support to increase their writing skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children capably use numbers as labels and for counting in planned one to one number activities, and freely in everyday experiences and play. They develop a good understanding of calculation and the links between numbers and how they can be split into different groups, but still add up to the same total. Children know many 2D and 3D shapes. They independently refer to space and positional language in their activities. They are frequently involved in measuring, both size and weight.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children enthusiastically learn about time, the natural world, their local environment, cultures and beliefs through a topic based programme. They have many opportunities to explore and investigate and enjoy making wormeries, growing plants and cooking. Children show great curiosity and persistence in exploring new materials. They learn good design and making skills. One to one computer work with staff helps them gain good skills in using simple programmes, the mouse and keyboard.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
------------	-----------

Children have daily opportunities for physical activity, both indoors and out. They are developing their skills in using a wide range of large and small equipment. They use their bodies confidently and spontaneously to explore movement and are involved in appropriate challenges to extend these skills further. Staff support them in learning about the effects of exercise on their bodies and keeping healthy. The children's development of fine motor skills is particularly good.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
------------	-----------

Children show imagination and creativity in their artwork and role play, often introducing a storyline. They confidently communicate their ideas and feelings using a wide variety of media and are given many opportunities to use all their senses, such as in fruit tasting and cooking. They regularly listen to music and play musical instruments. They enjoy visits from local musicians adding to their experiences, and encouraging their understanding of rhythm, pace and volume.

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 the following:
- make all parents and carers aware of the detailed records kept of their children's development and their progress towards the early learning goals, and that they are available for them to view.

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.