



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 650093

DfES Number: 511398

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	21/10/2003
Inspector Name	Susan Elizabeth Warren

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Little Clacton Playgroup
Setting Address	Engaines Primary School 4-11 St. Osyth Road East, Little Clacton Clacton-on-Sea Essex CO16 9PH

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Jane Harrison
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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 Clacton Pre-School opened in 2000. It operates from a double demountable classroom within the grounds of a primary school in Little Clacton, Essex. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently fifty seven children from two to under five years on roll. This includes thirty funded three year olds and three funded four year olds. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 - 12:15 Monday to Friday and 13:00 - 15:30 Monday to Thursday.

Eight full time/part time staff work with the children. Two members of staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Two staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and professional specialists for children with special needs.

How good is the Day Care?

Little Clacton Pre-School provides a satisfactory standard of care for children. At present the group does not meet the required level of staff qualifications; this is being addressed through ongoing training. Supporting documentation and paperwork is in place but most is in need of reviewing and updating to meet the required standard. The premises is a strength of the group; it provides a versatile space, both indoors and outside, and is well resourced, having a positive effect on children's learning.

The children are generally safe and well cared for although no written risk assessment is in place. Children are supplied with food and drink for their needs in accordance with their parents preferences. Children with special needs receive very good support from staff and outside agencies such as a speech therapist.

The children follow a programme of activities designed to help them progress towards the early learning goals. This includes both adult led and child initiated activities across all learning areas. All children have access to activities; the environment can be adapted for those with special needs. Behaviour is very good in response to staff's high expectations; children are polite, able to share, and understand right from wrong.

The partnership with parents is based on warm and friendly relationships; staff are approachable and happy to share information about the children on a daily basis. Parents support fundraising efforts and provide resources for the group, when requested, to support topic work. A useful noticeboard displays information about the group in the entrance lobby area. Some information in the parents' literature is out of date or lacks important details.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Actions agreed at the last inspection included upgrading the registration system to show when staff and children are present; this has been done. The group agreed to introduce a policy outlining their approach to administering medication; although a brief statement has been added this is not sufficient to provide a clear understanding for staff and parents and therefore needs further attention. A procedure for outings is included in the safety policy. A sheet to record details of volunteers at the group has been introduced. As a result of these improvements, children's welfare and safety are enhanced.

Other issues which were agreed but have not been addressed include carrying out a risk assessment of the premises and checking electrical items for safety; the formulation of an operational plan; and updating the complaints policy to include details of Ofsted. These issues will be carried forward following this inspection.

What is being done well?

- The premises and resources are well used to provide a stimulating learning environment. Children have freedom to move between the different areas during free play times, choosing their own activities. Outside they can play on wheeled toys or use the climbing frame to develop physical skills.
- Children with special needs receive good support and specialist outside help when needed. Strong bonds between staff and children are developed; this enables the children to take part in all activities and make good all round progress.
- The children's behaviour is very good. Staff consistently apply standards designed to encourage positive behaviour; praising children when appropriate.
- The group ensures that children have snacks and drinks in accordance with parents wishes and dietary needs; occasional food tasting and cooking activities introduce new tastes and sensory experiences.

What needs to be improved?

- documentation, including records, policies and procedures
- organisation; by developing an operational plan and by introducing induction procedures for new staff
- procedures for checking safety of the premises and of electrical equipment and appliances

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
6	Conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying action to be taken to minimise identified risks	20/11/2003

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

Std	Recommendation
2	Introduce induction procedures for new staff
2	Begin to formulate an operational plan
6	Ensure electrical equipment and appliances are regularly tested for safety
14	Review all records, policies and procedures to ensure that they comply with national standards requirements

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 Clacton Pre-School is good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development and their physical development and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good; staff make good relationships with the children and manage their behaviour very well. Children with special needs receive excellent support to enable them to access all activities. The use of the premises is imaginative and provides a stimulating learning environment both inside and out of doors. There are some weaknesses with staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals; the planning is not linked directly to the stepping stones and does not show the learning intentions. Assessments chart children's achievements but are not used to show the next stages of learning; there are insufficient challenges provided for more able children.

Leadership and management is generally good; areas needing improvement, such as the issues referred to above, are recognised and the group accepts all outside support to make improvements. Further training is seen as the way forward and trainee staff are well supported. Staff and managers have an open and honest working relationship and issues are discussed openly; all staff's contributions are valued and taken notice of. The monitoring of the educational provision is not effective as planning is not linked directly to the foundation stage curriculum.

Partnership with parents is generally good and makes a positive contribution to the quality of children's experience at the setting. Parents are supportive of fundraising and provide resources for topic work when requested. Staff and parents have informal discussions each day to exchange information about the children, but there is no formal procedure in place to report on children's ongoing progress and development.

What is being done well?

- Children concentrate and persevere at self chosen tasks, such as when making a model or learning to use scissors
- Children learn about the wider world and other cultures through the imaginatively planned programme covering festivals, cultural events and general knowledge
- During small group work children develop their vocabulary and are able to express their thoughts and ideas
- Music and drama opportunities develop children's imagination and expressive skills; they are confident to perform to a small or larger group

- Children with special needs are warmly received and have good support from staff and outside professionals to help them gain maximum benefit from experiences and activities whilst attending
- Staff form friendly, professional relationships with parents and key workers have good knowledge of individual children

What needs to be improved?

- knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, and of how children learn so that assessments are meaningful, for all staff
- planning to ensure that activities are linked to the early learning goals and offer sufficient challenge to more able children as well as appropriate development opportunities for younger children
- the programme for communication, language and literacy so that children are introduced to letter sounds and how these link to form simple words

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure that children's progress in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world are clearly observed and assessed, and activities closely related to the early learning goals.

Progress on this has been poor; planning of activities is not linked to the early learning goals, therefore this will be carried forward as a key issue for action following this inspection.

Children's records to date do not show progress in creative development or knowledge and understanding of the world, however the recently introduced assessment and developmental record system is based on the stepping stones.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are interested and eager to take part in activities; they develop independence and are able to choose their own resources, understanding the need to share equipment and take turns. Children behave very well in response to staff's high expectations; they are polite and ask for help when needed. They learn about other cultures and beliefs and celebrate traditional festivals as well as those from around the world.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

The children confidently discuss real and imaginary events whilst working alongside staff and with their friends. Listening skills are developed with the use of tapes of various sounds. They enjoy a variety of books, either self chosen or at group story time. Opportunities to write for a purpose are provided by the 'telephone book' in the role play area. Currently there is no programme in place to teach letter sounds or develop more able children's skills and understanding of word building.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use numbers in everyday contexts; they count the children present and sing counting songs and rhymes. They recognise numerals using play equipment and from wall displays. Mathematical equipment allows children to make patterns and learn colours. They learn about shape using construction kits and by direct teaching. Mathematical language is used when making models and during outdoor play. Plans do not offer sufficient challenge to develop problem solving skills or introduce calculation.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children explore leaves and objects found in the outside play area. There are no challenging activities for more able children to develop their investigation and observation skills. Models, using junk items and construction kits, develop designing and building skills. Some everyday technology is used in the role play area but IT skills are not currently developed. Children discuss events and ideas as they complete their 'news' books. Interesting visitors include a storyteller, and a barn owl.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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The outside area provides physical development opportunities with space to run and move, as well as low level climbing equipment and wheeled toys. Children move around safely inside the playrooms with awareness of space for themselves and others. Small muscle control and hand/eye coordination is developed by use of a range of equipment including mark making and craft items as well as tools for cooking, puzzles, construction kits and sand and water play.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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A combination of free and guided painting, collage and printing allows exploration of colour and texture. Junk modelling teaches about shape and form. Children sing a variety of songs and occasionally use a karaoke machine and a tape player. Musical instruments are used to explore rhythm and pitch. The role play area is themed at different times and encourages children's expression of ideas, thoughts and feelings. Children enjoy drama sessions when they act out known favourite stories.

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

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage curriculum including the early learning goals, and of how children learn, so that assessments are meaningful
- devise a planning format which ensures that activities are linked to the early learning goals; that activities offer sufficient challenge to more able children as well as appropriate development opportunities for younger children
- introduce a programme within the area of communication, language and literacy to introduce children to letter sounds and how these link to form simple words

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.