



**Office for Standards
in Education**

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 650059

DfES Number: 542248

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 22/03/2004
Inspector Name Linda Cass

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Childsplay Day Nursery
Setting Address Clarendon Way
 COLCHESTER
 Essex
 CO1 1XF

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mr Gary Mark Seward

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

Childsplay Day Nursery opened in Colchester in 1999. Childsplay have two nurseries, one in Colchester and the other in Earls Colne, Essex. The Colchester nursery operates from a self contained and purpose built building which is adjoined to Adventure land, a children's soft play area, that is also owned by the proprietors. The nursery is located very close to Colchester's North Station. The nursery is used by parents who either work in Colchester or who are commuting from the station.

The nursery is registered to provide places for 114 children aged between birth and five years. There are currently 75 children on roll. This includes 35 funded three year olds and 27 funded four year olds. The nursery consists of ten base rooms. The children are divided into three rooms for babies 0-1 year. There are four rooms for babies 1-2 years. Children aged 2-3 years, 3-4 years and 4-5 years have one base room each. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are two children who have special needs and the nursery supports seven children whose first language is not English.

The day nursery is open five days a week for fifty one weeks a year from 7.00am to 18.00.

There are 24 staff who work with the children, 12 are qualified, with the remaining staff working towards a qualification. Additional support staff are employed. The proprietors are either on site or contactable.

The setting receives support from the Early Years Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Childsplay Day Nursery provides satisfactory care for children.

Staff work well together and create an environment that is warm and welcoming to children although a sound management structure is not currently in place. Space is used creatively enabling children to play and learn in comfort. The premises are well

maintained but risk assessments are not completed and some area's are unsafe. Although staff supervise the children well, they are not aware of health and safety issues within the setting. There is an excellent range of equipment that is used to provide meaningful activities for the children, although some craft activities are adult directed and do not allow the children to explore for themselves. This impedes on their natural curiosity and their creativity is hindered. A comprehensive operational plan is in place but it is not always implemented within the setting. Some staff are unaware of the policies and procedures and are not following them efficiently.

Staff show a high awareness of good hygiene practice. Children are taught about the importance of washing their hands within the daily routine. The rooms are clean and well organised with clear routines in place for staff to follow. Meals and snacks are nutritious. Children's individual routines are given careful consideration and are met well. Staff are supportive and sensitive towards the children and they feel secure within the setting. A policy is in place to ensure staff are aware of child protection procedures, although the induction training is poor and training needs are not always effectively identified and met.

The staff's gentle and consistent approach towards the children promotes positive behaviour. The children are content and confident.

Relevant information is provided for parents informally by the child's key worker when requested. Parents are able to attend a parent evening twice a year. Records are kept detailing the individual care needs of each child.

What has improved since the last inspection?

A procedure is now in place for lost or uncollected children.

Risk assessments have been put in place but are not implemented, therefore risks are not being addressed.

A key worker system has been extended to cover the complete nursery age range.

Consent forms are in place for the administration of medication but were not being used by all staff.

Consent forms are now in place for accessing emergency medical treatment.

The complaints procedure now includes the name and contact telephone number for Ofsted.

Policies have been reviewed in line with the National Standards. However, the behaviour management policy does not include bullying.

Overall the implementation of the actions from the transitional inspection are not fully ensuring the setting are able to provide a safe environment for children supported by policies and procedures that are fully understood by all staff.

What is being done well?

- Children are able to explore a wide variety of interesting activities. The staff sit at their level and offer them support and encouragement as they play. The outdoor play space and indoor soft play centre provides children with valuable opportunities to develop their physical skills. Activities are planned to incorporate all areas of children's development.
- Children are provided with nutritious meals and snacks prepared by a fully qualified cook. They enjoy the meals and are offered second helpings.
- Children settle easily in the warm, welcoming and friendly environment. The staff know the children well and meet their individual needs effectively. The routine allows children time for physical play, rest and quiet activities, such as story time, drawing and puzzles. The children are cared for by a dedicated staff team who are enthusiastic and enjoy being with them.
- The nursery has an excellent range of resources. Children are provided with activities and play opportunities that help to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Staff are deployed effectively and resources are organised so that they are readily accessible to children.

What needs to be improved?

- the management structure
- the planning of craft activities and implementation of 'Birth To Three Matters'
- the behaviour management policy
- the implementation of effective risk assessments
- the induction procedure for staff to ensure they fully understand policies and procedures
- the safety of the outside play area for very young children
- the provision of domestic type furniture and comfortable seating for staff
- the implementation of the operational plan.

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
1	Appoint a manager who has the relevant qualification, skills and ability for the role.	20/04/2004
2	Appoint a deputy who has the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to take full charge in the absence of the manager.	20/04/2004
4	Ensure that the outdoor play space is safe for children under 2 years.	20/04/2004
6	Implement risk assessments and ensure staff are trained to have an understanding of health and safety requirements for the setting.	20/04/2004
7	Ensure the procedure for administering medication reflects the nursery policy and that it is fully understood by all staff.	20/04/2004

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection	
Std	Recommendation
2	Implement the operational plan so that it reflects the practice within the setting.
2	Ensure induction training is completed for all new staff and that their training needs are identified and met.
3	Ensure craft activities are appropriately planned to allow children to build on their natural curiosity as learners, and implement the Birth to Three's Matters pack.
5	Provide domestic type furniture in the rooms for children under 2 years to assist in developing their mobility, and ensure staff have appropriate seating so that they can work with the children comfortably.
11	Ensure the behaviour management policy identifies the procedure taken in the event of a child being bullied.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Childsplay Day Nursery offers acceptable provision for the children but has significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by the quality of teaching with significant weaknesses in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.

Staff provide some worthwhile play opportunities but overall the quality of teaching has significant weaknesses. Staff interact appropriately with the children, are involved in their play and use open ended questioning. However some elements of the curriculum are very adult directed such as creative work and the use of worksheets for developing numeracy and literacy skills leading to the learning being limited. Staff have an insecure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and do not fully understand how to plan an educational programme to support progress in all areas. Due to recent staff changes and new planning systems being implemented there are gaps within the educational provision. Staff do not give sufficient emphasis to evaluating activities therefore plans do not give appropriate coverage to aspects of numeracy, developing a respect of cultures and beliefs and exploring media and materials and using children's own creativity through free expression in art and design.

Children are polite and friendly and play is co- operative. Children know the boundaries and expectations of adults. Overall behaviour is good.

Assessment of children's learning takes account of the stepping stones but is not used effectively to inform planning. Staff do not adapt activities to provide sufficient challenge for more able or to meet the needs of less able children

Leadership and management has significant weaknesses. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the provision are ineffective.

The partnership with parents and carers has significant weaknesses. Parents are given limited information about the provision and educational programme.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is well fostered. Children have good relationships with each other and staff members and are confident to share their views and ideas. Children have a good sense of right and wrong. They are able to share and take turns as they play co-operatively with each other. Staff provide consistent boundaries for the children.
- Children speak clearly and confidently as a result of the staff's consistent interest and engagement in their play and conversations. Children have good concentration skills and listen with pleasure and enjoyment to a range of different stories, rhymes and songs.

- Children move, confidently, imaginatively and safely and demonstrate good control and co-ordination especially when using large apparatus.

What needs to be improved?

- staff's knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones to ensure that opportunities for learning and challenge are not missed within the planning of activities.
- planning to ensure that there is a balance across all areas of learning that builds on children's previous knowledge and their interests
- assessment to inform future planning and to adapt activities to meet the needs of all children.
- the effective monitoring of the educational provision by the management
- opportunities for parents and carers to be fully informed about their children's learning and to contribute what they know about their children.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Childsplay Day Nursery has made limited progress in addressing the point for consideration from the last inspection and this has had significant impact on the children's learning. The nursery have insufficiently addressed the issue of extending their planning to present a clearer view of activities undertaken on a weekly basis to ensure all aspects are covered on a regular basis. As staff are beginning to develop and evolve their planning to ensure it links effectively to the stepping stones, they have yet to evaluate their practice to establish clear learning outcomes.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident and competent learners. They enjoy attending the nursery and have meaningful relationships with adults and peers. They become absorbed in their chosen activities and demonstrate high levels of concentration. They listen attentively and enthusiastically contribute to discussions. They show consideration towards others and overall behaviour is good. Children are adept at meeting their individual self care needs. They are being introduced to learning about the wider world.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children interact, talk and negotiate clearly with others. Children enjoy sharing their views and ideas and use speech skilfully to explore real and imagined experiences. Older children gain worthwhile opportunities to extend their phonetic knowledge, however there are limited activities provided for younger children for linking sounds and letters. Children handle books with familiarity. They develop their handwriting skills illustrating art work and mark making in role play situations.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children recognise and count number consistently and use mathematical language competently as they talk about size, name colours, shapes and use positional language purposefully to discuss placement of objects in their small world play. However children are not developing an understanding of calculation and practical problem solving. They do not use number for comparison and are not learning about addition or subtraction.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children have limited opportunities to investigate, explore and learn about the natural world and features of their environment. Children build with a purpose using a wide range of construction resources, however poor emphasis is given to developing children choice of ways to assemble. Children are adept at working with the computer. Children are not developing an understanding of time and place and there are limited opportunities to teach children about the wider world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move freely and safely within their environment. They demonstrate good control when using the outdoor play area as they pedal bicycles with vigour and manoeuvre around obstacles. Children gain an awareness of space as they seat themselves in a group for story and move and stop to music as statues. They learn about keeping healthy through topic work. Children handle a range of small and large tools, although access does not encourage independence such as using scissors for cutting.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Insufficient emphasis is given to supporting children to gain varying experiences of a range of media and materials allowing opportunities for individuality in design. Children are limited in exploring two and three dimensional art work with a majority of craft activities being adult directed. Children enjoy singing familiar songs and appreciate the difference between singing quietly and loudly. They move to music in drama and use their imagination in role play and when retelling stories.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones to ensure that opportunities for learning and challenge are not missed within the planning of activities.
- ensure that there is a balance across all areas of learning that builds on children's previous knowledge and their interests in planning
- extend assessment to inform future planning and to adapt activities to meet the needs of all children.
- ensure the effective monitoring of the educational provision by the management
- provide opportunities for parents and carers to be fully informed about their children's learning and to contribute what they know about their children.

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.