



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 106118

DfES Number: 511131

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	20/05/2004
Inspector Name	Janet Butlin

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Exminster Pre-school
Setting Address	Deepway Centre Deepway lane Exminster Devon EX6 8AT

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Exminster Pre School 1024111
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Exminster Pre School
Address	Deepway Centre Deepway Lane Exminster Devon EX6 8AT

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

Exminster Pre-school is managed by a committee of parents and operates from the village hall in Exminster, just outside Exeter, in Devon. Accommodation comprises a large hall and a secure, enclosed garden. It is registered to care for up to 30 children aged from three to under five years and sessions are offered from Mondays to Fridays, 09.15 to 11.45. A lunch club extends the sessions to 13.30. Afternoon sessions are offered until 15.15 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in a specially designated classroom at the nearby primary school. This group is registered separately and is known as Cygnets. Children staying to lunch at the pre-school may walk down to school with the staff and join in the afternoon session. These sessions are run, planned and managed by the pre-school and up to 26 children may attend these sessions. There are currently 67 children enrolled. Of these 38 are funded three-year-olds and 29 are funded four-year-olds. There are no children with special educational needs. The group supports children who have English as an additional language. A staff of 11 support the provision, two of whom have the equivalent of NVQ level three in Childcare and Education. Two staff are working towards this qualification and seven others have undertaken relevant training. There are strong links with the local school. The group receives the support of the Devon Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and the Foundation Stage Advisory Teachers. It is accredited by the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Exminster Pre-school offers generally good quality nursery education where children enjoy learning through a range of interesting activities. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in most areas of learning. Their progress in the areas of physical development and creative development is very good. Children are confident, well behaved and show independence.

Teaching is generally good. The staff are enthusiastic and work well together as a committed team. Their generally sound understanding of the Foundation Stage enables them to plan an interesting range of activities although some are unsuitable for a large group. The overdependence on the use of worksheets as a means of activity planning means that staff do not take advantage of the potential to develop children's learning through their everyday play. This particularly impacts on their mathematical development, which has weaknesses. The nursery has no children attending who have special educational needs but there is an effective system in place which is likely to provide good support. Sound support is given to children who have English as an additional language. although there are limited opportunities to enjoy language differences. Helpful assessment of children's learning is completed termly but ongoing observations are not effectively used to inform day-to-day planning and grouping and to ensure adult-led activities are appropriate. The setting has a good range of equipment which is used well to cover all areas of learning although mark-making materials in role-play are not routinely provided.

Leadership and management are generally good. The staff are supported in their professional development. The setting is committed to improvement. having contact with the Devon EYDCP and LEA support services. There is a very good partnership with parents. Helpful information is provided regarding forthcoming activities, themes and events. Regular communication is welcomed.

What is being done well?

- Children are confident, polite and eager to take part in activities. They settle well and have good relationships with staff and each other.
- Children's physical development is given good emphasis and children are enabled to understand the importance of keeping healthy.
- A variety of materials and textures are explored and children are able to be freely creative in their artwork and role-play.
- Children's enthusiasm regarding the use and enjoyment of books is outstanding.
- There is a very good partnership with parents who receive a warm welcome in the setting.

What needs to be improved?

- ensuring that plans contain sufficient detail to be helpful to all staff and make it clear how children will be supported in their learning and how they will be grouped, placing less emphasis on worksheets as a method of teaching
- ensuring that children's mathematical development receives sufficient emphasis in day to day activities
- providing opportunities for children to make marks and write for a purpose, for example in their role-play
- ensuring that children have opportunities to explore and enjoy aspects of their own culture such as home language.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The group has made limited progress with the key issues arising from the last inspection, but overall the impact on the provision has been positive. Consistent attention is given to developing children's awareness of the sounds of letters and the way in which the group observe and assess the children's progress has improved. This assessment method is clear for parents to follow and they may contribute to the process if they wish. Although the group have not specifically addressed this issue in their action plan, good use is now made of appropriate technology to support learning. It is not clear whether the system of planning is any more useful than that used at the time of the last inspection as it still does not provide much helpful detail regarding methods to be used or identify how individual children will be supported in their learning.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are happy, settle quickly to play and are eager to take part in activities. They are confident to speak up and show independence, being able to competently change their clothes for PE sessions. Children explore a variety of cultures but aspects of children's own culture, such as language difference, are given insufficient value. Children are thoughtful and considerate to staff and to each other and behaviour is good, although they become restless when groupings are too large.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children enjoy lively conversation which is well supported by staff. They are able to recognise their own names and consistent emphasis is given to the sounds that letters make. Each session starts with an extremely good period of literary enjoyment when children listen to stories and use books in small groups and by themselves. Writing and mark making is frequently over directed and children have insufficient chances to write for a variety of purposes such as taking notes in their role-play.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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There is some engagement with number in whole group time and in worksheet activities, but these are not presented in meaningful contexts. Occasionally worthwhile activities are planned to encourage children to sequence and count but staff do not take sufficient advantage of day-to-day activities to encourage and support children to consolidate their mathematical understanding through their everyday play, for example, ordering and sorting and counting items or measuring water.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Very good use is made of technology to support learning and children are skilled in the use of computers. They have very well developed opportunities to design and make models using a variety of materials, deciding for themselves how each piece will be joined on. Staff support very good discussion to enable children to think about why things happen and similarities and differences, such as in a floating and sinking experiment. Unhelpful methods of recording spoil children's enjoyment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move confidently and imaginatively around the setting and staff encourage them to use a variety of different movements, for example in their whole group PE sessions. They show a good awareness of space and there are no collisions. They use wheeled toys with skill and control and develop their small muscles effectively using tools such as scissors and dough cutters. Good emphasis is given to the importance of staying healthy and children are reminded to protect themselves from the sun.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children enjoy exploring colour and discuss how possible colour combinations will work out. They enjoy applying paint, for example to their salt-dough models, and foot painting activities provide worthwhile opportunities to discuss how things feel. Delightful, stimulating, junk-modelling activities enable children to freely choose from a wide variety of interesting textures and shapes. Children take part in extensive and involved role-play and have frequent opportunities to enjoy music.

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

- When planning, focus on the methods to be used to ensure that children's individual needs are met, that they are supported in their learning and that they are grouped appropriately
- make improved use of everyday activities to consolidate children's mathematical understanding and encourage mark making for a variety of purposes - placing less emphasis on worksheets
- improve opportunities for children to value and explore different aspects of their lives and cultures including enjoying their home language.

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.