



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 956291

DfES Number: 521461

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 13/10/2004
Inspector Name Claire, Alexandra Parnell

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St Stephen's Pre-school
Setting Address 37 Waterloo Road
Tonbridge
Kent
TN9 2SW

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of St Stephen's Pre School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Stephen's Pre School
Address 37 Waterloo Road
Tonbridge
Kent
TN9 2SW

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

St Stephen's Pre-School opened 1979.

It operates from a church hall in Tonbridge town centre. The pre-school services the local area.

There are currently 86 children 2.5 years to 5 years on the roll. This includes 48 funded three year olds and 15 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports two children with special needs and two who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week during school term time all year round. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:45 and 12:45 to 15:30.

There are nine staff working with the children. Seven of these staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 and 3. There is one member of staff who is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St Stephen's Pre-school is an acceptable provision and of good quality. The children are making generally good progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

The teaching is generally good. All the staff use effective questioning in varied ways taking into consideration the child's level of ability. The more able child is challenged with extension in their learning. Staff use a lot of song through out the session to help children to learn the routine and basic knowledge, particularly with regard to daily and environmental information. Children are introduced to effective language from staff, linked closely to the topics of interest. The group's planning for the children's development needs to be reviewed with additional details and links between what they see the children achieve and further planning of activities. Some less able children find some resources too challenging and therefore lose interest. This also relates to large group opportunities such as story, song and circle time. Although there is clear differentiation for levels of ability and understanding in practice, this is not clearly shown in the planning of activities.

The leadership and management of the group is generally good. The staff have good support from the committee, who take an active role in the progression of the group. Staff have opportunities to expand their knowledge and experiences, to offer differing skills enabling positive teaching. However, due to the limited management structure of the group at present, the group lacks opportunities to assess strengths and weakness, particularly in areas of teaching and organisation.

The partnership with parents is generally good. There is clear information for parents regarding the themes and topics that the children are learning about. Parents have regular opportunities to meet formally with their key worker, who gain initial developmental information on each child. However, parents are not given guidance on extending learning at home.

What is being done well?

- The staff interact positively with the children throughout the session. They use effective questioning for all the children and give subtle and sensitive support to those who may need it. More able children are given effective extensions in practical activities and in discussion. All the staff teach the children in a calm and professional manner installing positive behaviour from all the children. Children's differing educational needs are seen to be implemented well in practice, with particular regard for more able children, children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.
- The children make advanced designs and construct using a range of resources. They can explain their purpose and how it is used. The children are intrigued into how things work and why they work. They are interested in

play, sharing experiences from the past and expressing their wishes to experience new situations.

- The activities offered are fully linked to the themes and topics. Children bring items from home to extend their interest and learning.

What needs to be improved?

- the development of the planning; to extend information and details, to link the plans to observations, to children's progress and to future aims for children's development.
- the organisation of the sessions with regard to differing needs of the children, particularly the less able children, taking into consideration large group activities and the relevant resources offered to the children
- the opportunities for children to make marks and write, enabling them to write for a purpose in role play situations and attempt to label their own work.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The improvements since the last inspection are generally good.

The group were asked to meet two key issues at the last inspection.

They needed to develop partnerships with parents, keeping them informed of their children's progress. There is now regularly displayed information regarding the topics and themes that the children will be learning about and parents are encouraged to help their children to bring in objects of interest linked to the themes and topics. However, parents lack information regarding the importance of play and how children learn from these experiences, and that an end result or finished product is not always necessary.

They needed to re-organise the snack time to provide learning experiences and increase the children's independence. The children are joined at small tables by members of staff who interact positively with the children, talking about what they have been doing and what they are going to do next. They children can select their drinks and make decisions from two choices. They also have a selection of fruit made available to them. However, the drinks are poured for them and the fruit is already pre-cut. Therefore still limiting their independence.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are independent, confident learners, encouraged to do things themselves if resources allow. The more able children support less able children in their learning, explaining how to use equipment. They share and negotiate play and equipment well, encouraging others to take turns with resources and space. They openly express their likes and dislikes to peers and adults. However, the less able and younger children disrupt large group opportunities through limited concentration.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

The children confidently communicate using voice, gestures and expressions. They link objects and words with sounds and letters. They listen intently to stories, less able children in small groups and more able children in large groups. However more able three year olds lack opportunities to attempt to write their own names, and to explain their 'show and tell' independently. Less able children have limited concentration during large group times, therefore disrupting this for other children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

The children count confidently. Some more able children can count up to 29. There are many opportunities for children to count during structured and practical activities. Some more able three year olds and most four year olds can compare groups and work out the most. Some can work out differences. They can follow examples to reproduce patterns and sequences. Some initiate the patterns themselves. However, more able children lack opportunities to identify numerals in practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

The children design and construct complex recognisable pieces, selecting and connecting them for a purpose. Four year olds are intrigued in how things work and show others how to successfully use equipment. They understand aspects of their environment and can make decisions to show their understanding, especially regarding the weather. They recall past experiences, who it was with, where it was and when, and can express their wishes for future experiences.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

The children creatively use space, negotiating and manoeuvring safely around others and the equipment. They extend their play particularly in role play to free areas. They safely use large equipment with subtle support from staff to use it independently. They effectively use small tools and equipment for a purpose. However, children missed opportunities to learn about the importance of keeping healthy.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children act out familiar roles using appropriate resources and using appropriate language. They sing familiar songs throughout the session to remind them of everyday events. They confidently sing using correct words and actions. There are regular opportunities for all children to react to music, movement, dance and sound. However, some resources result in less able children not attempting to carry out activities.

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

- review the organisation of the sessions and resources, particularly the morning sessions, to allow for the differing needs of the less able children. Extend the planning to show differentiation and levels of ability, linking this to the observations and evaluation, and back to the future planning of children's development.
- develop opportunities for all children to make marks for a purpose, with regard to labelling their own work and in role play situations.

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.