



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 135311

DfES Number: 514967

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	01/07/2004
Inspector Name	Philippa Clare Williams

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	LEADING STRINGS PLAYGROUP
Setting Address	ST. JOHN'S CHURCH HALL BOURNE HILL PALMERS GREEN LONDON N13 4DA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	The Partnership of Sandra Bennett and Tina Clayton
Address	Leading Strings Playgroup St. John's Church Hall Bourne Hill London N13 4DA

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

Leading Strings Pre School has been registered since 1996. It operates from a large church hall situated on the site of St John's Church, which is situated on a corner of busy road in Palmers Green N13. There is a very small paved outdoor play area. It serves the local area.

There are currently 54 children from two years to five years on roll. This includes 6 funded three year olds and 28 four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently is not supporting any children with special needs or who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week for 44 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 9.30 to 15.00, or there are morning or afternoons sessions.

Five staff work with the children. Most the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level two or three. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Leading Strings Pre School provides good quality care for children. The Pre School is well managed and the motivated staff team provides a warm welcoming environment for the children. The premises are set out well with children in mind and the range of resources offered are both age appropriate, safe and well maintained. Staff ensure the environment is safe, although some attention needs to be given to the security of the premises. Children bring their own packed lunches, although fresh drinking water needs to be available to children at all times. Children's health and hygiene is promoted well in most areas. Documentation is of good quality and policies and procedures promote the smooth, efficient and effective running of the pre school.

Relationships between staff and children are a strong feature as a result children are happy and confident and are well behaved. Adults plan a broad range of interesting

activities which overall promote children's learning. Staff spend their time talking, questioning, listening, engaged with the children, and supporting them in their learning.

Partnership with parents are good, they are kept well informed and encouraged to get involved in their children's learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the previous Inspection the pre school were required to expand their Sick Child Policy, this is now in place, the pre school has a very clear policy in place for sick children.

What is being done well?

- A broad range of activities are provided, staff make learning fun for the children. Children are confident learners, they enjoy their time in the pre school and are developing well
- Relationships between staff and children are good. Staff promote positive behaviour, they are good role models, as a result children are learning to play well together.
- The organisation of the environment is good, it is well set out with a good range of resources and activities available which enable children to self select.
- Children' art work, photographs, notice boards, posters contribute to a welcoming child centred environment.
- The policies and procedures in place promote the smooth, efficient and effective running of the pre school

What needs to be improved?

- the detail of the child protection procedure so they include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff
- children's access to fresh drinking water
- the security of the premises and that children are unable to leave them unsupervised, the safety of the carpet so it does not pose a trip hazard to children and the availability of fire detection equipment
- the hygiene practices with regard to hand washing

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
6	Make sure that premises are secure and that children are unable to leave them unsupervised, that the carpet does not pose a trip hazard to children and that appropriate fire detection equipment is installed.
7	Ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing
8	Make sure children have access to fresh drinking water at all times
13	Update child protection procedure so they include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Leading Strings Pre School offers good quality education where children are making generally good progress towards most the Early Learning Goals, and very good progress in language and literacy and personal and social development. The quality of teaching is generally good. Most staff have a good knowledge of the early learning goals and stepping stones. Staff plan a broad range of activities and make learning fun. Deployment of staff is good. Staff have established positive relationships with children and manage behaviour well, as a result children are well behaved. Staff are able to fully engage children and extend learning most of the time, although not always in some aspects of maths. They encouraged them to think for themselves through good questioning techniques. Staff observe and assess children's learning, they set targets, however this information is not always used effectively in the planning. Children have access to a wide range of good quality resources and are able to select independently.

The leadership and management is very good. The Manager leads through example and is a positive role model to staff. Staff work very well together to create a positive learning experience for the children. They are deployed appropriately around the setting. The staff team are very committed to improvement and attend ongoing courses

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents stated that they were happy with the standard of care and education the pre-school provides. Parents felt comfortable to approach staff with any concerns. They found the information on themes covered and the library scheme, helpful in supporting children's learning at home. They stated that they receive sufficient information about events within the pre-school. They stated that they are confident that they could participate fully should they wished to do so. Staff however now need to look at ways of giving parents opportunities to contribute to their child assessments.

What is being done well?

- Children benefit from effective teaching to help them to design and construct with the different resources. They became adept at using the construction sets and made some elaborate structures.
- Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress. There is a good range of books which can be borrowed to help children learn at home.
- Children are confident and interested in activities provided. They approach activities with excitement and participate enthusiastically. They are confident in selecting own activities and making choices.
- Children talk and communicate confidently with staff and each other. Many opportunities are provided for children to discuss and share ideas.

What needs to be improved?

- the promotion of children's independence at drink and snack times and the opportunities for children to express and communicate their ideas creatively.
- the assessments so that they are used to plan the next step in children's learning, that they are used inform planning and the opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's assessments.
- the short term plans so that they are effective in clearly identifying the role of the adult and how activities will be adapted or extended to meet the individual learning needs of children
- the opportunities for more able children to begin to calculate, add, subtract and develop understanding of how things work and their ICT skills.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The Pre School has made very good progress since the last Inspection

At the last Inspection the Pre School were required to:

"give more emphasis to helping 4 year old children to associate sounds with patterns in rhymes, with syllables and with words and letters"---The pre school uses circle time, story time and small group sessions as an opportunity to sound out letters and words. Children have a developing understanding of sounds of letters.

They were required to "facilitate and encourage 4 year olds to use crayons and pencils with increasing control"---A well resourced graphics area has been created and children access this area throughout the session, they are encouraged to develop pencil control through staff support.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children approach activities with excitement, they are enthusiastic and eager to participate. Children concentrate well. They have established good relationship with each other and staff and behave well, and show concern for each other. Children learn about different cultures. They are developing good self care skills they choose resources, use the toilet and wash their hands, although greater emphasis needs to be given to promoting their independence at drink and snacks time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident talkers, they speak in a large group about their experiences. Staff question children well and encourage children to use and understand new vocabulary through topics. Most children can write their own names, although staff do not always give children every opportunity to practice their name on their art work. Children write shopping lists, letters, in play. Children enjoy stories and have access to a well resourced book area. They are learning that letters have sounds.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show that they can count up to 10 and beyond. They are given good opportunities to recognise numbers and shape through topics covered, displays and resources. Children are learning about size and shape through practical activities for example by estimating measure and shape with wooden blocks and completing puzzles. There are few opportunities for more able children to develop an awareness of addition and subtraction.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Planned activities help children notice changes e.g. watching play dough turn from liquid to solid over heat. Children make very good use of construction toys to build elaborate structures and models. Children contribute to their own profile books. Children learn about their natural world, they grow and care for plants and the gold fish. Some equipment available helps children learn to use technology and how things work, however this is not sufficiently challenging for more able children.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have daily access to tools and materials to develop their manipulative skills. They steer and pedal and follow the right direction using wheeled toys. They are learning to throw and catch, they use the small slide, climbing frame, trampoline and tunnel with increasing control. Insufficient emphasis is placed on helping children learn about staying healthy and effects of exercise on their bodies.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children participate in singing sessions with enthusiasm. They use their imagination in the role play areas. They freely draw and create from the play dough. Children's art work show children have had good creative opportunities however the painting and sticking activity was too over directed by staff.	
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

- promote children's independence at drink and snack times and ensure children are given opportunities to express and communicate their ideas creatively.
- ensure assessments are used to plan the next step in children's learning, that they are used to inform the planning and provide parents with opportunities to contribute to their child's assessments.
- ensure that short term plans are effective in clearly identifying the role of the adult and how activities will be adapted or extended to meet the individual learning needs of children
- provide more opportunities for more able children to begin to calculate, add, subtract and develop their ICT skills and learn how things work.

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.