



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 402180

DfES Number: 512448

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 23/01/2004
Inspector Name Chris Gregson

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Old School House Kindergarten
Setting Address 239 London Road
Stanway
Colchester
Essex
CO3 8PB

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Old School House Kindergarten Ltd 4472348

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Old School House Kindergarten Ltd
Address 239 London Road
Stanway
Colchester
Essex
CO3 8PB

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

Old School House Kindergarten opened in 1996. It operates from six rooms in a house in Stanway, Colchester. The kindergarten serves the local area.

There are currently one hundred and twenty-three children from nine months to under five years on roll. This includes forty-eight funded three-year-olds and fourteen funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a number of children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The kindergarten opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 08:30 until 15:00.

There are fifteen staff working with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. There are three staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

The Old Schoolhouse Kindergarten provides good care for children. An excellent operational plan and an effective induction procedure are in place. The premises are clean, bright and maintained to a very high standard. There are colourful, informative displays in all areas creating a very stimulating environment for young children. Excellent facilities, with good quality, child-sized furniture, toys and resources, enable children of all ages to rest, sleep, sit comfortably and play. Children play outdoors daily, weather permitting. The babies and toddlers have direct access into this garden area.

Safety is a very high priority and excellent procedures are in place to ensure staff are well informed about health and safety. Allergies and dietary needs are recorded and implemented and staff are extra vigilant when a child has a severe food allergy. Staff are trained in first aid and comfort children well if they become ill during the

day. Staff are very warm and caring and supportive to individual children. Staff and parents are informed of child protection procedures and further staff training is planned. Extra support is given when needed, but the special needs policy needs updating to reflect the good practice in place at the kindergarten.

An excellent range of activities is provided across the ages to enable all children to be engaged in purposeful play throughout the day. The assessment system for the under threes is currently being reviewed. Excellent information is given to staff and shared with parents concerning all aspects of the kindergarten.

Partnership with parents is very good. There is excellent written information for parents. Staff verbally share the children's daily routine with parents and a diary is used for younger children. Termly reports are written for older children. Staff are very friendly and approachable. Parents are very happy with the care provided in the kindergarten.

What has improved since the last inspection?

N/A

What is being done well?

- Very detailed operational plan with comprehensive information about the children's daily routines, organisation and staff deployment throughout the kindergarten.
- Very warm, caring staff who provide reassurance and support, especially for the younger children and babies.
- Safety is a high priority and effective procedures are in place throughout the kindergarten.
- Staff are very friendly and have a respectful attitude towards parents, who are very happy with the provision of care and education for their children.

What needs to be improved?

- the special educational needs policy to be updated in line with recent changes to reflect actual good practice in the kindergarten.

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
10	Review and update the special needs policy and ensure it is consistent with current legislation and guidance.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision of nursery education at the Old Schoolhouse Kindergarten is good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Children make generally good progress in creative development.

The quality of teaching is generally good with some very good aspects. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn. However, there is some inconsistency about how young children learn through play, and the balance between adult-directed and child-led activities is limited in some areas. There is a strong emphasis throughout the kindergarten on basic literacy and numeracy skills. The observation of children's progress is very good, however, the new assessment records are not currently linked to the stepping stones of the early learning goals. Staff are skilful at managing children's behaviour showing kindness and respect to all.

Leadership and management of the kindergarten are generally good with some very good aspects. There is a strong ethos of caring and education throughout the kindergarten and all staff understand this. Training is encouraged and staff have annual appraisals and the opportunity to implement new ideas. The introduction of a 'toy list' ensures all areas of learning are covered daily by the use of the resources. The manager constantly visits all the rooms, reviews practice and is committed to providing quality for children and their families.

Partnership with parents is very good. Staff are friendly with a professional approach and ensure parents are informed of the children's activities verbally and through daily record sheets. Parents questionnaires show they are very happy with the kindergarten.

What is being done well?

- Parents are given high quality written information in the prospectus. Bright and attractive notice boards keep parents informed of the activities and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's learning through the reading books that go home.
- Children can access an excellent range of resources, posters, displays, books, jigsaws, dolls and small world people that promote early learning and reflect diversity and life experiences. This enables them to develop an understanding and acceptance of their own and different cultures.
- Children are encouraged in their learning by very caring and extremely supportive staff who know the individual children well. They have very good relationships with the children and enable them to develop a positive attitude

to learning.

- Staff have high, but realistic, expectations for children's behaviour and are excellent role models demonstrating respect towards children, parents and other adults. Children respond in a positive way and are considerate, kind and polite.

What needs to be improved?

- further develop the children's assessment records and link them to the stepping stones to show their achievements and identify the child's next steps
- encourage children's own creativity in art, craft and music.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good progress has been made in implementing the action plan drawn up to address the two key issues identified at the previous inspection resulting in some improvements being made to the educational programme.

The assessment records have been developed, however, these are being reviewed and further improved.

Very good use is now made of props at story time and children are engrossed and fully engaged by skilful staff.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are interested, motivated and are eager to learn, and confident to try new activities. They are happy to come to the nursery and develop very good relationships with staff and each other. They share, take turns and show genuine concern for others. Children are developing self-confidence and independence as they choose activities, pour drinks, put on coats and help tidy up. They confidently talk about their family and happily show visitors around the garden.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are able to communicate through talk, gestures and enthusiastically join in rhyming songs. They have a letter of the week and are learning to link letters with sounds. There is a good range of fiction and non-fiction books on displays and large books for story-time. Children enjoy listening to stories. They know how to use books and are learning early reading skills. Children use emergent writing during role-play and practice writing their names.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children can count confidently up to ten and beyond and competently recognise and use numbers. They count backwards as a rocket takes off and enthusiastically sing songs to practice simple adding and taking away. Children use mathematical language to compare and describe position at the small world space station. They use Compare Bears to talk about size and to sort by colour or weight. They know shapes and can match 2D and 3D shapes in practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy exploring a variety of materials. Stimulating activities give them opportunities to watch change, such as cornflour mixed with water. They study dinosaurs and compare differences in leaves. They confidently join, build and use a range of tools and materials and re-cycled boxes to make a flight deck in a space ship in role play. They push buttons on telephones and confidently use the computer. Children talk about past events such as birthdays and going skiing.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children move freely and safely inside and outside. They crawl through a tunnel, climb up, balance on, and slide down the climbing frame. They have an awareness of space when sitting in a group and when lining up to go outside. They know about good hygiene and can get a drink when thirsty. Children use a variety of tools to develop their fine motor skill and hand eye co-ordination. They use play dough to mould and shape, explore wet and dry sand, and thread dried pasta.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children know colours and explore textures when making collages. They mix paints together, print with leaves and identify colours when playing with shapes. However, many activities are adult-directed with few opportunities for children to use free expression. They play musical instruments and readily join in songs, however, there are few planned opportunities to hear different musical sounds. Provision for role play is good and children use their imagination to act out their experiences.

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

- further develop the children's assessment records and link them to the stepping stones to show their achievements and identify the next steps in their learning programme
- encourage children's own creativity in art, craft and music.

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.