



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 105826

DfES Number: 522337

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	19/10/2004
Inspector Name	Anne Legge

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Apple Tree Pre-School
Setting Address	Sidmouth Infant School Manstone Avenue Sidmouth Devon EX10 9TJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Apple Tree Pre-School Committee 1038724
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Apple Tree Pre-School Committee
Address	Sidmouth Infant School Manstone Avenue Sidmouth Devon EX10 9TJ

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

Apple Tree Pre-school opened in its current location in 1999. It operates from a classroom in a school close to the centre of Sidmouth and serves the local area.

The pre-school is registered to care for 18 children, aged from 3 to 5 years. There are currently 40 children on roll, including 25 funded three-year-olds and 13 funded four-year-olds. The group welcomes children with special needs or with English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:00 to 11:45 every day, and on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays there is a lunch session from 11:50 to 12:45, followed by an afternoon session from 12:45 to 15:15. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

One full-time and three part-time staff work with the children. Two staff members hold an early years qualification and one is about to complete a training programme. The pre-school is managed by a committee and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. They receive support from a Foundation Stage advisory teacher and a range of other relevant professionals.

How good is the Day Care?

Apple Tree Pre-school provides good quality care for children. Staff provide a comfortable and attractive environment for children, making good use of the available space, to offer a range of play opportunities. Staff are well-qualified and ratios are good. Children feel secure and settled in the pre-school. All the required documentation is in place, although some lacks the necessary detail, or is not always shared appropriately with parents.

The premises are secure and safety standards are good. Staff teach children good hygiene routines and have appropriate systems for the care of sick children. They promote healthy eating, providing nutritious snacks, and ensure that all special dietary needs are known and met. Staff are committed to respecting all individual

and cultural differences and to meeting the needs of families. They work effectively with parents and other professionals to support children with special needs. They have a good understanding of child protection issues and procedures.

Staff plan a good range of activities for children and support their play, using questions and discussion to promote their development. They make good relationships with children and have a positive and patient approach to the management of behaviour, taking time to explain why children should behave appropriately.

Staff have an excellent partnership with parents. They seek to involve the whole family in the work of the group. They provide good information about the pre-school and its activities and ensure that parents have regular opportunities to see their child's records and discuss their progress with staff.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the pre-school agreed to request consent from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, and to include contact details of Ofsted in the complaints procedure.

Emergency consents are now in place for all children and the complaints procedure has been amended to include Ofsted's address. However, it is not clear that parents can complain directly to Ofsted, without first speaking to staff or committee members, and the telephone number is still missing.

What is being done well?

- Staff provide a comfortable and attractive environment for children, using space creatively, to offer them a wide range of activities. Children are happy and settled at the pre-school.
- Safety is given a high priority. Staff make regular risk assessments of the premises and teach children to recognise potential hazards.
- Staff plan a good variety of interesting activities for children. They talk and play with them, helping them to develop their understanding and skills.
- Staff are committed to equal opportunities and to meeting children's individual and special needs. They value individual and cultural differences, and work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure that each child's needs are known and met.
- Staff have excellent relationships with parents and involve them in many aspects of the pre-school's work. They are supported in this by the committee, who help to run events which demonstrate the group's commitment to working with families.

What needs to be improved?

- the complaints procedure, to include the information that parents can complain to Ofsted at any time, and the telephone number of Ofsted
- daily registers, to include times of arrival and departure of children and staff
- records of medicines administered, so that they are always signed by parents at the end of the session.

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
14	Make sure that all documentation is sufficiently detailed, especially daily registers, to include times of arrival and departure of children, medicine records, to be signed daily by parents, and the complaints procedures, to explain clearly the role and contact details of Ofsted.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Apple Tree Pre-school provides good quality nursery education and the children make generally good progress overall towards the early learning goals. They make very good progress in their physical and creative development, and in knowledge and understanding of the world.

Teaching is generally good, with some very good aspects. Staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and use discussion, questioning and sometimes direct teaching effectively, to develop children's understanding. They plan a very good range of activities, covering all areas of learning, and usually meet the needs of all children. Assessment systems are in place, but staff do not make regular observations, so records are not always current. Assessments are not always used to plan appropriate challenges for the most able children, especially in mathematics and literacy. Children choose freely between activities. Sessions are not always structured to make good use of time, with some activities lasting too long or lacking purpose. Good systems support children with special needs. Children generally behave well, and staff are skilful in their handling of individuals, but children do not always concentrate in whole-group activities, as expectations are not always clear.

Leadership and management is generally good. The manager is a strong leader and the staff work well as a team, supported by the committee. Systems are in place to monitor the quality of education provided, and staff have identified some areas to improve. Staff are committed to improving their practice and have sought help from an advisory teacher.

Partnership with parents is very good. Staff provide very good information about the curriculum and about all activities. They involve parents in their child's learning, by arranging parent activities to support the current topic. There are good systems to keep parents informed about their child's progress and parents are encouraged to contribute to records.

What is being done well?

- Children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world, due to the skill with which staff talk to them and question them, challenging their thinking and developing their understanding.
- Children have many opportunities to become very creative. They have access to good art and craft resources, so that they can select and experiment, and they are well supported by staff in their role play and small world play.
- Children become competent in a wide range of physical activities. They develop very good hand control, through a variety of planned activities and

daily routines, such as spreading butter, pouring drinks and threading beads.

- Staff know children well and are very effective in their use of questions and discussion, to extend children's understanding and develop their skills. Direct teaching in circle time is sometimes excellent.
- Staff have developed a very good partnership with parents. They ensure that parents are always well-informed about their child's activities at pre-school and they provide regular opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress. They aim to involve the whole family in their work.

What needs to be improved?

- systems for regularly observing children and recording their progress towards the early learning goals
- the use of assessment information to plan appropriate challenges for children who learn quickly, especially in mathematics and literacy
- the organisation of sessions, so that time is used well, the learning intentions of all activities are clearly identified, and children always know how to behave.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the pre-school was asked to fully implement its assessment system, and to use it in planning and for informing parents. Staff were also asked to use daily opportunities to develop children's understanding of letter sounds.

The pre-school has made generally good progress in addressing these issues. A very good assessment record system is now in place, which should show clearly how children are making progress towards each of the early learning goals. However, the system is not yet used effectively, as staff do not make sufficient observations to keep records up-to-date. Consequently, the information is not used well to inform parents or to guide planning.

Staff use the initial letter sound of children's names as part of daily routines, and most children recognise the sound and the letter shape. However, children's understanding of letter sounds and shapes is not systematically developed through a range of daily activities, and children who learn quickly are not always sufficiently challenged in this area.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are confident and enthusiastic learners. They develop good independence skills, choosing activities and resources, and managing their personal care, such as washing hands and pouring drinks. They relate well to each other and to adults, helped by staff, who teach them to consider the needs of others. They concentrate well at their chosen activities and usually behave well, but concentration and behaviour are not always good in whole-group sessions, when expectations may not be clear.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children talk confidently in large and small groups. They use language well to describe events or to organise their thinking, such as when role-playing mealtimes. They enjoy stories and choose to share books. They begin to discuss letter sounds and shapes, in their own name, but this is not systematically extended for more able children, nor reinforced in daily routines. Children write for different purposes, such as registers in role play, and begin to form letters correctly in their name.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children count in a range of contexts, such as counting beads on a string. They accurately relate numbers to groups of objects and begin to recognise numerals. They learn about two-dimensional shapes in practical activities, such as making shape sandwiches. They use mathematical language in planned activities, such as comparing lengths and solving problems. They do not develop their understanding of number by comparing groups or discussing more or less, in daily routines.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children develop a good sense of time and place, through frequent discussions with staff about events in their lives and places they have visited. They compare and sort objects and use their senses to explore sand, water, dough and craft materials. They design and make in a variety of craft activities and with a good range of construction kits. They use a computer and other technology equipment. They learn about their own and other cultures by celebrating festivals and sharing family faiths.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move confidently and with control. They enjoy a wide variety of physical activities in the school hall and playground. They run, jump, climb and balance with increasing control. They use large equipment, such as tricycles and scooters, with skill, and develop very good hand control, using scissors, pens and brushes with good co-ordination. They learn about their physical needs through discussions about body changes after exercise, and in topics, such as 'All about me'.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children develop very good imaginations in their role play and small world play, making up stories and recreating experiences. They create freely in art and craft activities, and have constant access to a good range of craft resources. They explore colour and texture in different media, such as collage, paint and drawing. Staff encourage creativity by following children's interests, such as making carnival floats with decorated wheeled toys. Children sing, use musical instruments and dance.

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

- continue to develop systems for regularly observing children's achievements and recording their progress towards the early learning goals. Use assessment information to plan appropriate challenges for children who learn quickly, especially in mathematics and literacy
- review the organisation of sessions, so that time is used well, the learning intentions of all activities are clearly identified, and children always know how to behave.

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.