



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 400369

DfES Number: 582132

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	26/11/2004
Inspector Name	Elizabeth Patricia Watton

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Sowerby Nursery School
Setting Address	The Portacabin Sowerby County Primary School, Topcliffe Rd Thirsk North Yorkshire YO7 1RX

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Sowerby Nursery School 1042174
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Sowerby Nursery School
Address	The Portacabin Sowerby County Primary School, Topcliffe Rd Thirsk North Yorkshire YO7 1RX

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

Sowerby Nursery School is a committee run provision. They have their own premises in the grounds of Sowerby Primary School which includes an enclosed area for outdoor play. The nursery school has been registered since 1992. They admit children from Sowerby and the surrounding area, if the demand for places is high, priority is given to those children who live in Sowerby. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

Care is provided for a maximum of 24 children from 2 to under 5 years, for up to four hours per day. Current opening hours are from 8:55 to 11:45 and from 12:55 to 15:25, Monday to Friday, term time only.

Funded nursery education places are provided for those children of eligible age. For this they have the support of the Local Education Authority. Of the 37 children currently on roll, there are 24 funded 3 year olds and no funded 4 year olds. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with special educational needs: there are none who speak English as an additional language.

There are a total of five staff who work with the children, of whom all are appropriately qualified. The group also welcomes parental participation, mainly in connection with outings and committee responsibilities.

How good is the Day Care?

Sowerby Nursery School provides good care for children. There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere where children feel relaxed and confident. The adult-child ratio is very good, there is a strong established team of staff and they are well qualified. This ensures a high level of good quality support for the children. The arrangement of premises and the presentation of the resources create a child friendly and stimulating environment for the children. Documentation is well organised and staff attend carefully to record keeping, however a permanent record of visitors to the nursery is not always retained.

All reasonable measures are taken to ensure the children's health and safety with particular attention paid as the children leave the building with their parents. The daily snacks are healthy and nutritious with individual dietary needs clearly displayed for all staff to see. The staff get to know the children and their families very well: they have a good knowledge of the children's needs and dispositions and they enjoy the children's personalities. This promotes the children's individual development and contributes positively to their overall wellbeing. The staff's calm manner and their consistent use of praise and encouragement ensures that the children behave very well. There is a high emphasis on early learning: the wide range of first hand experiences ensures that children develop their language and mathematical skills to a good level and use their imagination freely throughout the session.

Relationships with parents are very good. The information for parents about general nursery business and their own child is clear and relevant. Parents are very pleased with all aspects of the nursery mentioning particularly the friendly welcoming environment and the range of activities. The open door policy, parents' involvement at committee level and regular social gatherings further foster trusting relationships.

What has improved since the last inspection?

not applicable

What is being done well?

- The staff's positive approach to professional development and their overall dedication ensure that the standard of care offered continues to be evaluated effectively and developed.
- The interactive colour display and the presentation of all the facilities ensure that the children remain interested and motivated throughout the session.
- The wide range of activities and the children's free-flow access to them ensure that they are able to develop their natural curiosity as learners.
- The settling in procedure is very good: the accompanied visit prior to admission is a useful time for sharing information. This is particularly effective in ensuring that children with special needs feel confident in their surroundings and with their support worker.
- The staff are excellent role models for the children: they use praise confidently and consistently and remember to thank the children. This ensures that the children are cheerful, behave very well and develop very pleasant manners.

What needs to be improved?

- the daily record of visitors, to ensure that a permanent record of all those visiting the nursery is clear.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

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	Ensure that the record of visitors is clear and retained.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Sowerby Nursery School provides a calm yet industrious atmosphere which enables the three-year-old children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Teaching is very good. The staff have a sound knowledge of the early learning goals and the associated stepping stones. The colour coded planning and assessment system show clearly the intended learning. There is an effective balance of meaningful routines, free-choice opportunities and adult led activities which maximise the children's development in all areas of learning. The staff use excellent conversational questioning to scaffold the children's learning. The arrangement of the premises and the presentation of the activities provide the children with a stimulating learning environment although access to the outdoors is limited in poor weather. The children respond very well to the behaviour management techniques used: they are confident in their approach to independent learning yet easily able to sit and listen in group situations.

Leadership and management is very good. The manager co-ordinates the planning and involves the whole team effectively: she draws on their individual ideas and skills for the plans and encourages them to put their ideas in to practice. The programme of professional development enables staff to update their skills and knowledge relating to early years education. The nursery works well with the local authority to assess and improve their educational provision. A supportive committee and links with the school contribute positively to the overall educational and organisational aspects of the nursery.

Partnership with parents is very good. They are welcomed warmly into the nursery and are included in their children's education in various ways. Parents receive clear information about their child's progress both formally and informally. The settling in period provides parents with clear verbal information about the foundation stage.

What is being done well?

- The staff use excellent scaffolding techniques to help the children to think about what they are doing or making. This enables staff to increase their understanding about what the children know and how they can be challenged appropriately.
- The stimulating environment motivates children to access all the free choice learning opportunities confidently. This contributes considerably to the calm industrious atmosphere and the children's independent learning.
- The staff skilfully help the more boisterous children to play safely whilst not interrupting their exuberant creativity.

- The staff work well with the local authority: they willingly accept advice and support on various issues, particularly the inclusion of children with special needs and the development of the outdoor area.
- Parents receive clear information about their child's stage of development. There are regular informal discussions as the children are collected with a more formal approach to this at the parents' evenings.

What needs to be improved?

- the development and the use of the outdoor area to further promote learning in all areas of the curriculum throughout the year
- the written information for parents about the foundation stage.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The improvements made since the last inspection are very good. The planning system was amended to include a clear colour coding: enabling staff to easily identify the learning objective for each activity. The group found that this worked well at the time. They have recently been working with the local authority to develop the system further to ensure consistency with other early years settings in the area. This positive approach to change and the willingness to work with the local authority ensure that this aspect will continue to develop at a very good level.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children are happy and settled. They are confident, motivated and are able to sit and concentrate, listening attentively in group situations. Due to the consistent and caring support from the staff, the children behave very well: they happily share with their friends and willingly help to tidy up when invited to do so. The children focus at their self chosen tasks for extended periods of time and develop their own ideas as they play, particularly at the construction.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

The children speak increasingly well to communicate their immediate needs and order their thoughts about what they are doing. The adults help the children to develop their range of vocabulary. They begin to understand the written word and its various uses: the children confidently find their name card for self registration, use their developing pre-writing skills to make appointments at the pretend hairdressers and enjoy flicking through magazines and comics while they wait.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children develop their counting skills within their favourite activities. They carefully check that all players have the correct amount of dominoes and that there are enough chairs at snack time. They begin to understand about size and shape: the staff help them to name the shapes that they need for their lotto or domino games. They begin to develop their understanding of more and less in number rhymes and can use simple mathematical language to compare the height of their brick towers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

The children use lego to construct with real purpose: they modify their plans as their ideas change or are influenced by others joining the game. They celebrate traditional festivals and begin to learn about other cultures. Carefully planned topics enable children to investigate their local environment, learn about where vegetables come from and how to use them for soup. The children begin to use technological toys to support their learning and show interest in the new digital camera.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children develop their physical skills to a high level as they climb and balance on the various outdoor equipment. In winter this is through carefully planned activities indoors using smaller equipment. The children learn about keeping healthy: staff help them to make a collage of foods, carefully separating the sweet wrappers from pictures of fruit and vegetables. The children practice their fine motor skills by playing with lego, drawing and fastening their own coats and dressing up clothes.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children explore colour and learn a variety of paint techniques. They express a great deal of pleasure as they make bubble pictures and laugh as they see their speckled faces in the mirror. The children participate confidently in the well resourced role play areas. They act out familiar experiences and use their imagination as they play in the hairdressers or home corner. The children sing a range of songs from memory and are praised when they make up songs about what they are doing.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report but consideration should be given to improving the following:
- the outdoor area in accordance with the nursery's own development plan, so that learning opportunities in all areas of the curriculum are increased throughout the year
- the information for parents about the foundation stage, so that parents have a further understanding about how each area of learning is addressed through play.

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.