



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 141823

DfES Number: 537374

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 06/12/2004
Inspector Name Dorcas Elizabeth Forgan

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Castlethorpe Pre-School
Setting Address The Village Hall
North Street, Castlethorpe
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK19 7EW

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Castlethorpe Pre-School 104010

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Castlethorpe Pre-School
Address C/O Lianne Flach, 61 Thrupp Close
Castlethorpe
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK19 7PL

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

Castlethorpe Pre-school opened in 1974. It operates from the Village Hall in the village of Castlethorpe, which is near to Milton Keynes. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday to Thursday from 09.30 to 12.00 during school term times. The outdoor play area is under development.

There are currently 16 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 7 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the village and surrounding areas.

The pre-school employs three staff. The manager and one other member of staff are completing training.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Castlethorpe Pre-school provides good-quality nursery education overall which enables the children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Senior staff have good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Other staff are gaining experience through practise and training, but they do not always extend the activities to allow the children to practise skills or provide challenge, particularly in mathematics. The plans are comprehensive and ensure provision of a wide range of activities, which promote the children's learning. Adaptations are made to activities for children with different abilities. Regular observations and assessments are made of each child. The staff use positive strategies to manage the children's behaviour. The children are well behaved and polite. The staff have good relations with them. Resources are used well.

Leadership and management are generally good. The lead practitioner is in control of the sessions and delegates duties; the staff know their roles and responsibilities. They work well as a team and are flexible. The group monitor and evaluate the educational programme. However, The displays of individual children's artwork is limited. The daily routine is not always effective, due to activities involving wheeled toys not having clear learning intentions. The new committee support the staff and ensure any identified training needs are met. All are committed to improvement.

Partnership with parents is very good and contributes to the children's learning. The written information given to parents is very clear. Parents are encouraged to help in the group so that they can observe and share their skills and knowledge. They are informed in various ways about the curriculum. They have access to their child's file whenever they wish and receive a written report.

What is being done well?

- Children develop their creative skills through various opportunities. They have time to complete tasks to their satisfaction. The mark-making table gives children the chance to choose materials and resources as they wish with no preconceived tasks to achieve.
- Staff use very good strategies to promote good behaviour and consideration of others. The children understand the boundaries. They react well to positive reinforcement. Children's behaviour is good.
- The team of staff work very well together. They are dedicated to ensuring that the children are happy, settled and given the opportunity to become independent. The staff know the individual children well. Relationships with the children and their parents are good.

- The pre-school gives parents clear written information about planned activities and what the children have enjoyed taking part in each day. Parents are informed of their child's progress and the curriculum through the record of development and learning, and twice yearly information evenings. Children are encouraged to choose books that they can share with their carer at home.

What needs to be improved?

- evaluation of the daily routine to ensure that time is used effectively and activities involving pedalling and scooting have clear learning intentions
- opportunities for children to practise their counting skills
- the opportunities for children to practise climbing
- displays of children's individual artwork.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Overall, the improvement since the last inspection has been generally good. The group were required to provide opportunities in the programme for children to be able to practise climbing and balancing.

Physical development is included in daily plans. All necessary activities are included to develop large and fine motor skills apart from opportunities to climb. A climbing frame was purchased under the previous management; this has proved to be unsafe. The group are fundraising for a different frame and hope to be able to use it in the near future. The group borrow larger equipment such as balancing beams from the local school. Children enjoy practising on these and are learning new skills.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are gaining confidence; they enter the group eagerly and approach adults to tell their news. They have good relations with the adults and other children. They join up with friends to play. Children concentrate and persevere at tasks. They choose between activities and take care of their personal needs, such as putting on aprons and washing their hands. The children behave well. They are learning to take turns, and to be polite and considerate of others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children chat confidently with adults and peers. Most are able to speak in front of large group with confidence, some need support. Staff listen effectively, and help the children to do likewise. Children are familiar with phonetics and enjoy recognising letters. They are able to recognise their own names and some are beginning to write them with varying amounts of skill. Children make good use of the mark making area. They enjoy listening to stories.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Most children can count up to nine. They use mathematical language during play and at activities and are confident in naming shapes. They explore and compare shapes and sizes through activities, such as which bottle is bigger than another. Staff miss some opportunities to reinforce numbers during daily activities such as counting at registration. The children have free access to the maths trolley.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children show an interest in exploring materials and finding how they work, such as the marbling inks and glitter shakers. They are becoming curious. They are adept at building items from construction sets. They are gaining confidence in using technology. The apple tree in the garden is used imaginatively as a resource to study different aspects of nature. Children are gaining a sense of time and place and are becoming aware of other cultures, customs and traditions.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have continuous opportunities through the session to practise pedalling, scooting and manoeuvring around objects. However, this activity does not provide challenges for the children and they do not have opportunities to practise their climbing skills. Staff show the children how to use the balancing beam in different ways. The children develop fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination through manipulation of small objects such as screwing lids onto small bottles and handling sequins.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children participate enthusiastically in music and singing sessions. They express themselves imaginatively through dance. They enjoy singing familiar songs and practising Christmas favourites. They can beat a rhythm. Children express their feelings and communicate ideas. They draw freely at the mark-making table and create Christmas cards with good resources and support. They explore various materials and media, such as adding glycerine to water causing the glitter to be suspended.

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

- evaluate the daily routine to ensure time is used effectively and that there are clear learning intentions when children are using the wheeled toys
- the extension of activities by all staff to ensure children have opportunities to practise their skills in counting.

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.