



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 109432

DfES Number: 585110

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	30/03/2004
Inspector Name	Alison Weaver

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Grovelands Acorns Pre-School
Setting Address	Dunbar Drive Hailsham East Sussex BN27 3UW

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of The Management Committee
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	The Management Committee
Address	Grovelands Acorns Grovelands School Hailsham East Sussex BN27 3UW

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

Grovelands Acorns Pre-School opened in 1997. It operates from a modern purpose built school building with a separate area for the pre-school. It has two playrooms and an outdoor area. The pre-school is situated in Hailsham and serves the local community.

There are currently 62 children from 2 to 4 years on roll. This includes 37 funded 3 year olds and 20 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30 and 13.00 until 15.30.

Five staff work with the children. All the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. One member of staff is currently attending further training. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Grovelands Acorns Pre- school offers provision which is acceptable and of good quality. Children are making generally good progress towards all the early learning goals, apart from the area of mathematical development where there are significant weaknesses.

The overall quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan a varied curriculum. The activity planning, though providing a good foundation, does not indicate how an activity can be adapted or extended to ensure all children are challenged appropriately. The weekly written plans at times lack detail. Effective observations and assessments are carried out regularly but not used satisfactorily to inform future planning. Activities are well organised although some large group times are less effective in promoting learning. Staff develop good, caring relationships with the children and provide appropriate support to those with special needs.

Leadership and management of the setting is generally good. The manager has identified areas for improvement and is seeking to address these. There is currently no formal staff appraisal system in place. The educational provision is not evaluated as effectively as it could be. There is a commitment to improving the knowledge and understanding of staff through relevant training courses. The staff work well together as a team and feel very supported by the committee.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents are well informed about the setting and the activities, particularly relating to the Foundation Stage. They are very welcome in the group and some attend as helpers or serve on the committee. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning and the assessments but this is not yet fully extended. They receive regular verbal feedback about their child's progress.

What is being done well?

- Children are confident, interested and able to work independently. They relate well to each other and to adults.
- Staff use effective questioning with the children to make them think about what they are doing and express their ideas.
- A very good range of stimulating equipment is available.
- The group gives helpful suggestions of activities that parents can do with their children at home so that they are involved in their child's learning.
- The staff team work well together and provide appropriate support to each other.

- The open evenings are a very successful way of keeping parents informed about their children's progress. They also enable staff to build positive relationships with parents.
- The staff plan and provide a very good range of opportunities for children to explore and investigate. The children clearly enjoy these stimulating activities.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to develop an understanding of calculation and mathematics through everyday activities
- written plans, to show how activities can be adjusted to take into account children working at different levels and rates, making use of the information gained from the assessments, and the activities are evaluated
- the use of the outdoor area to promote children's development
- the use of whole group activities to ensure that all children are involved and gaining from these times
- opportunities for parents to contribute to children's learning and assessments.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting has made generally good progress towards addressing the key issues raised at the last inspection.

The group was asked to extend the weekly plans to include all areas of learning and to give clear learning intentions. This has been addressed but needs further development. The written weekly plans include all the early learning goals but at times lacks detail about the specific learning intentions. The focus activity plans give clear indications as to the learning intentions of those activities. The group also uses the 'Vehicles for Learning' posters for the general activities in the group which show the learning intentions. Staff are fully aware of what children can learn from the activities.

The group was also asked to use the assessments to inform written plans to show how activities can be adapted to meet individual needs. Currently the assessments are used verbally with staff to discuss future plans but this is very casual. The group still needs to extend the written plans to show how activities can be extended or adapted to cater for individual needs as identified by the assessments.

The opportunities for parents to contribute to children's assessment records are still limited. The group has recently started getting parents to complete a section in the children's profiles where they can put their comments. This is an area that is still being developed and as yet parents rarely put in their observations of children's learning at home. Parents give other verbal contributions to staff on an informal basis. Opportunities need to be further developed where parents can contribute to the assessments.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are confident and very settled in the group. They are developing their independence through a variety of ways. The children relate well to each other and to adults. Overall children show good levels of concentration and they enjoy the variety of activities available. The clear boundaries set by staff ensure that children generally behave well. They learn to share and take turns. At some large group activities a few children find it difficult to sit and listen to others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are confident speakers who engage easily in conversations with each other and with adults. They listen avidly to stories and enjoy books although the use of the book area is not fully promoted. Children enact a variety of role play situations. They recognise their names and are showing increasing skill in letter formation. There are missed opportunities to extend children's understanding of the link between sounds and letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children are able to count successfully to 10 and beyond. They show a developing understanding of shape and size. They successfully sort and match. Regular opportunities for children to practise their number skills and recording are missed. Progress in developing children's understanding of calculation is limited due to insufficient opportunities being provided in everyday activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are encouraged to explore and investigate a wide range of objects and materials. They are given frequent opportunities to explore the natural world and simple science. There are missed opportunities to design and construct. They confidently use the computer, showing very good mouse control, but at times there is insufficient adult interaction to extend children's learning. Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and the outside world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children successfully use a range of tools and small equipment. They show good co-ordination skills and spatial awareness. Children enjoy a good range of large play equipment. They are developing good ball skills. Children's progress is not always being fully extended due to the lack of clear planning in this area of learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children confidently express their ideas and feelings in imaginative play and in various other activities. They experience a variety of resources and materials. They enjoy using their senses to explore and show an interest in what they discover. They are developing an ability to recognise and name colours. There are missed opportunities for children to enjoy music and singing on a daily basis.	
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

- Plan and provide opportunities for children to develop their mathematical understanding, including calculation, through everyday activities.
- Extend the plans for physical development to include clear learning intentions for the use of the outdoor area.
- Ensure that assessments are used to inform future planning to enable all children to make progress, and that written plans include details of how activities can be adjusted to cater for children working at different rates and levels.

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.