



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY219409

DfES Number: 542296

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 17/12/2003
Inspector Name Linda Oliver

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Crocus Early Years Centre
Setting Address Saffron Walden County High School
Audley End Road
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB11 4UH

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Crocus Early Years Centre Limited 4146359

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Crocus Early Years Centre Limited
Address Newlands
Howe Lane, Hempstead
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB10 2NZ

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

The Crocus Early Years Centre was opened in 2002. It operates from purpose-built single storey premises situated in the grounds of the County High School in Saffron Walden. There are four playrooms, a kitchen, staff room, office, laundry and toilet areas. There is a fully enclosed outside play area consisting of a soft play area, grass and tarmac.

There are currently 100 children from 3 months to 5 years on roll. This includes 29 funded 3 year olds and 5 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The centre supports a small number of children who have special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The centre opens 5 days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00 hours. A special 07:00 start is available if required.

There are 17 staff working full or part time with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2, 3 and 4. The setting receives support from qualified teachers within the staff team and also from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. (EYDCP)

How good is the Day Care?

The Crocus Early Years centre provides good quality care for children aged three months to five years.

The environment is warm and welcoming and staff, space and resources are used effectively to ensure children are well cared for. Activities are well organised and there is a stimulating range of toys and equipment which are easily accessible and cover all areas of the children's learning and development. There are good procedures in place to maintain confidentiality and all documentation is reviewed regularly and kept up-to-date.

Staff provide a very safe and secure environment for the children. All staff are

vigilant in keeping children safe and have good procedures in place for outings. Staff have a good awareness of health and safety issues and carry out regular risk assessments. Most staff have current food hygiene and first aid certificates. Children's dietary requirements are handled sensitively, and they are provided with a balanced and healthy diet for their snacks and meals. All staff are aware of their child protection responsibilities.

Staff are fully involved with the manager in planning meaningful activities to cover the early learning goals. They provide a caring environment where children's individual needs are considered. Children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported. Children are encouraged to become confident and independent. Consideration of ways to enable them to freely access the outside play area and organisation at snack and meal times, will develop this further. Staff manage children's behaviour consistently giving them lots of praise and encouragement.

Parents, carers and visitors are warmly welcomed at the centre. All information, including policies and procedures and daily written and verbal communication, ensure that they are kept well informed of their children's care and development.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the providers agreed to complete the outside play area, acquire an incident book and comply with any recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer.

The outside play area is now fully enclosed and consists of a soft play area, grass and tarmac. A record is kept of any significant incidents and stored confidentially in the office.

The Fire safety Officer did not make any recommendations at his visit.

What is being done well?

- The managers have a very good knowledge of the National Standards and know how to interpret them in the best interests of the children. They have a forward thinking ethos and are continually developing and improving the provision of care and education for the children.
- Children have access to a wide range of good quality resources. The staff have a very good knowledge of the early learning goals and children benefit from a well planned programme of stimulating activities which help them make good all round progress.
- The designated person to support children with special educational needs has good regard to the current code of practice and implements the guidance well. Children's individual learning needs are considered and resources, equipment and activities are provided to accommodate specific needs. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved and staff work alongside other agencies in the best interests of the children.

- Staff are committed to promoting equality within the nursery and recognise that children's attitudes towards each other are established in these early years. They plan activities and provide resources to help children learn about equality and fairness through their play.
- The centre values the involvement of parents and they share information regularly. A home contact book is used for exchange of information for babies and also for the older children. Children are benefiting from this close partnership which reinforces their personal identity and security within the provision. The nursery also has a very good working relationship with the Saffron Walden County High School in whose grounds it is situated.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

Managers and staff have created a very homely and welcoming environment for the babies and toddlers attending the nursery. The care given to them is exceptional. Staff develop very good relationships with the families which allows them to understand and meet the children's individual needs. Staff consider the children's safety and welfare at all times and record the children's daily routine to share with the parents. Staff enjoy their time with the children and plan stimulating activities and experiences, including low level 'feely' bags, mirrors and lots of toys and equipment which are age appropriate and chosen to encourage their all round development.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to more freely access the outside play area throughout the year
- organisation at snack and meal times to further develop children's social skills and encourage independence.

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
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3	Make the outside play provision more freely accessible to the children throughout the year.
3	Review the organisation at snack and meal times to enhance children's social skills and encourage independence.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at the Crocus Early Years Centre is very good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff provide an excellent learning environment using a wide range of resources imaginatively to promote children's learning across all the six areas of the foundation stage. The staff's knowledge of how young children learn ensures that every child is able to consolidate and progress in their learning. Their enthusiasm and good teamwork ensures the smooth running of the centre. Staff form good relationships with the children so that they feel secure and confident and eager to learn. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and they respond well. All policies and procedures are in place and staff understand and implement them in their practice.

The leadership and management is very good. The vision of the proprietors to offer good quality care and education where children are happy and can play safely is evident in the environment provided. Their enthusiasm for providing children with an effective learning environment ensures that staff share the vision and work well as a team. Regular staff meetings, inset training, induction, appraisals and policy reviews take place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery provision.

The nursery has a very good partnership with parents. They have devised an effective routine for sharing information and encourage parents and carers to be involved in their children's care and development. Their views on the provision are welcomed via daily contact books, questionnaires and regular parent's evenings. In this way both parties are able to make practical contributions towards the children's care and learning.

What is being done well?

- Staff have a very good knowledge of the early learning goals which they use to plan a balanced range of activities throughout the nursery to help children make progress in all six areas of their learning.
- Activities are stimulating and well planned. They are meaningful to the children and take into account the range of abilities within the nursery. Children are active learners; they choose their own activities and sustain concentration well. They like to try new things and can talk about what they have done.
- Speaking and listening skills are well developed through well planned registration and circle times. Children join in and discuss the weather and their own news. They count and calculate how many children are present, enjoy listening and responding to favourite stories and sing songs and

rhymes enthusiastically.

- Children's interaction with staff is very good which enables them to feel valued. Staff develop warm and friendly relationships with children and their parents so that they have a good understanding of the children's needs. Children who have special needs and who speak English as an additional language are well supported. Staff consult with parents and other agencies to devise individual educational plans and provide them with appropriate equipment and resources to include them in all activities and help them make progress.
- There is a very real partnership between parents and staff which is aided by a well designed and informative prospectus. It gives parents and carers a good overview of procedures and policies as well as information about the different learning areas. Notice boards, internet forum, newsletters, daily contact books and discussions with friendly and approachable staff ensure they are kept informed and involved in their children's care and development.

What needs to be improved?

- the detail within the planning to include assessments of the children's progress to enable staff to make the best use of activities and experiences to promote the learning of all the children

What has improved since the last inspection?

N/A

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy, interested and well motivated to learn. They take turns and share with suitable staff support, especially during group activities. There are very good relationships between staff and children and behaviour is excellent. Children are developing and extending their personal independence, for example when putting on coats and pouring drinks. Children are developing a sense of the wider community through a good range of resources to stimulate their curiosity.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children's communication skills are very good. They enjoy stories and can link sounds to letters. Most children have begun to realise that print carries meaning and can recognise their names and other simple words. Children have regular opportunities to practice emergent writing and write their own names forming the letters correctly. Children use books for pleasure and reference purposes and enjoy participating in songs and rhymes, which they quickly memorise.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Staff give children many opportunities to use number and learn the concept of counting within routine activities. They take part in many worthwhile planned activities to solve problems, such as cooking, water play and number games. Staff support children's learning by using mathematical language across the curriculum, during games and in imaginary role-play situations. They have begun to use simple addition and subtraction in action songs and familiar routines.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are developing early scientific skills through effective use of a good range of resources. They enjoy using their senses to explore materials in practical activities, such as cooking. They use the computer with confidence and are provided with an exciting range of toys and equipment to build and design. They are beginning to understand and respect their own and other cultures through topic work and discussion about their own lives and significant events in the local and wider community.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children benefit from a variety of physical play both indoors and outside. They move with increasing skill, imagination and confidence as they ride wheeled toys and use equipment to balance, crawl and climb. Indoors, circle games and movement to music develop awareness of space and the effects of exercise on the body. Healthy eating is promoted and the choice of food offered reflects this. Fine motor skills are developed using a range of craft and mark making equipment, toys and puzzles.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

A balance of free and guided activities introduce colour, texture and form as children paint, make collages and use playdough. Children enjoy music as part of the daily routine. They sing enthusiastically and planned activities introduce them to dance, rhythm and movement. There are good opportunities for children to develop their imagination through role-play situations with props and dressing up clothes for inspiration. Children's work is valued and displayed attractively around the rooms.

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;
- consider developing the planning to include assessments of the children's progress to enable staff to make the best use of activities and experiences to promote the learning of all children.

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.