



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 101540

DfES Number: 585002

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	18/10/2004
Inspector Name	Miriam Sheila Brown

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Elfin Nursery Pre-School group
Setting Address	Cold Pool Lane Up Hatherley Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 6JA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Elfin Playgroup
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Elfin Playgroup
Address	Cold Pool Lane Up Hatherley Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 6JA

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 Elfin Nursery Pre-School Group is a well established, privately owned playgroup in Up Hatherley, a residential area to the south of Cheltenham. The playgroup operates from the village hall and has the use of a playroom, a quiet room, a kitchen and an enclosed outside play area. It is close to local schools, a church, library and shops.

Sessions for pre-school children are provided on Monday to Friday mornings from 09.15 to 11.45 and those for younger children on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 12.45 to 14.45, during school terms.

The playgroup is registered to care for 24 children from two to five years, and accepts children from two years and nine months. There are currently 28 children on roll of whom 22 are funded 3-year-olds and 2 funded 4-year-olds. The group do not currently support children with special needs or those for whom English is an additional language.

Five members of staff work with the children, including the owner. One staff member holds a National Vocational Qualification, level 3, in Childcare and Education and another will be completing her level 3 qualification in the coming months. Other staff hold appropriate level 2 qualifications and all have completed first aid and child protection training.

The group is supported by the Parent and Toddler Association, the local authority early years advisor and a peripatetic music teacher.

How good is the Day Care?

Elfin Nursery Pre-School Group provides good care for children. The premises are bright, clean and well organised with many attractive displays of children's work. The main playroom provides a stimulating area for children to play. The range of toys and resources are used well to assist in children's developmental progress.

Safety issues are well addressed and staff are vigilant in protecting children. Good basic procedures to manage accidents and hygiene are used to prevent the spread of infection although there is scope to improve the written information offered to parents. The group provide a varied and balanced snack menu which the children sometimes help to prepare, for example, making 'shape' sandwiches. Staff have a good awareness of child protection issues although the policy does not give sufficient information about group procedures in the event of any allegations against staff. Staff have all received child protection training.

A wide range of activities and topic work are organised each day to support children in all areas of their development. The weekly music session with an outside teacher is greatly enjoyed by all the children. The group resources support all aspects of equal opportunities and children enjoy tasting foods from around the world such as noodles, croissant and pizza. Staff are experienced in supporting children with special educational needs. Children's behaviour is good and staff are calm and consistent, assisting children in finding a positive solution to difficult situations. Children enjoy receiving stickers and being noted in the 'golden book'.

Parents are offered good information about the setting through parents evenings, booked appointments and the notice board. Parents are encouraged to share their skills with the group, for example, story telling. All group policies are easily available, although some do not reflect a contact for the regulatory body. Parental feedback sheets strongly support the group and it's staff.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no actions from the last inspection.

What is being done well?

- A good range of play activities are provided which help the children to progress in all areas of development. Children are enabled to make their own decisions about their play and staff make good use of observations to help them plan to meet the children's needs. Play for different ages and abilities is adapted appropriately.
- The play setting is very well organised, it is bright, clean and inviting, with a wide range of activities provided each day. Children have easy access to resources which are stored in wheeled low-level units. These provide an effective solution to the requirement to clear the play area most days.
- Group equipment is good and the range of resources available support all aspects of children's early development. Staff use and adapt these well to support children of different ages and abilities.
- The partnership with parents is very good. Regular parents evenings, booked appointments, informal discussions and parents notice board are all used effectively to provide an informative, welcoming setting for the parents.

What needs to be improved?

- the detail provided in the sickness and complaints policies to ensure that staff and parents are offered clear information
- the child protection policy to provide information about the procedures used by the group, if there is an allegation made against staff.

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
13	Ensure the child protection policy provides clear information to staff and parents about the procedures used in the event of an allegation being made against staff or other child protection concern.
14	Develop the policies for complaints and sickness to ensure they provide effective and useful information, including contact details for the regulatory body and clear guidelines about sickness procedures within the group.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Elfin Nursery Pre-School Group provides high quality care and children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. All six areas of learning are very good and provide positive learning experiences for the children. Music features highly in daily activities and both mathematical development and communication, language and literacy are very well supported.

Teaching and teamwork is very good. The manager has a very good knowledge of the early learning goals and how these are used to assist in children's learning. Staff support the children very well at all times and provide an exciting range of activities and experiences to help them develop in all areas of learning. Staff plan the day and use of resources well, creating a good balance of adult and child-initiated activities from which the children may choose independently. Very occasionally they offer too much assistance to some children. Staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of appropriate support for children with special educational needs. They treat all children with respect and are calm, consistent and positive in their approach to managing children's behaviour.

The leadership and management of the group is very good and has created a strong and effective staff team who work well together. They regularly assess their own strengths and weaknesses through staff meetings, the early years consultant, feedback from parents and the parent and toddler association. There is a positive relationship between the group and its feeder schools. Discussion with the group demonstrated a strong commitment to ongoing improvement.

The partnership with parents is very good. Termly open evenings, twice yearly individual appointments and informal discussion with key workers enable parents to take an active part in their children's learning. Parents are provided with good information about their children's progress and are encouraged to share individual talents and experiences with the group.

What is being done well?

- Music is extremely well used within the group and forms a regular and meaningful part of everyday activities and themed work. Children read from coloured dots to produce familiar tunes such as twinkle, twinkle little star, using tuned hand-bells and each week they enjoy music with a peripatetic teacher. These sessions are planned to support the current theme of work, for example, shapes.
- Early mark making and development of writing skills are well supported at each session. Children have many good opportunities to develop their small muscle control using chalks, chopsticks and pencils in their imaginative and free-play.

- Children's use of number is very good. They have daily opportunities to count in real situations and are keen to demonstrate their abilities. Staff include elements of mathematics in most activities for example, discussing the shape of fruits when cut into pieces and children are recognising halves and quarters.
- Group plans and assessments are well written and provide good information for staff and parents about all aspects of children's learning and development.

What needs to be improved?

- some minor aspects of staff involvement in child-led activities.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The group has made very good progress since last Ofsted inspection in January 2001 where one point for consideration was raised. This was to make the complete special needs procedures more easily available to parents.

Parents now have easy access to detailed special needs information. The policy document, which provides basic information, refers them to the full procedures which are displayed on the noticeboard.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children sit and listen well at circle and quiet times. They are keen to be group 'helpers' for the day taking responsibility for coats and the bell. Children are well behaved and respond positively to simple instructions. They are learning to be responsible for their personal care and select activities and resources independently. Their sense of place within the community is growing through visits to the local schools and church. Children are encouraged to be thoughtful of each other.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children enjoy talking about what Barney bear has been doing during the week and sharing other news with staff. They are starting to recognise the links between letters and sounds and that print has meaning. Children are keen to make marks in their play and are confident doing this. Their reading is well supported through the group library scheme, story times and music times when they read musical dots to play nursery rhymes. They enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are secure and accurate in their early number work. Some children recognise numerals to ten and most are able to count children in a circle. They estimate how many cups will be needed for their table and then check to see if they are correct. Children are confident in recognising shapes and they use appropriate language to describe these and other mathematical terms, for example more, less, larger and smaller. They create patterns threading pasta and using stickers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children discover how magnets work, play with compost and find out about printing with bubble wrap in planned activities. They construct in two and three dimensions using construction sets and recycled materials. Their sense of time is supported well through group routines and they use a local street map to mark Barney bears visits to their homes. Children taste a variety of foods and play with a wide range of resources which help to develop their awareness of different cultures and traditions.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move confidently using a range of large equipment. They demonstrate a good awareness of space when moving to music and are well coordinated, for example, when carrying chairs to form a circle. Topic work and group routines develop their awareness of keeping healthy and how their bodies work, for example, listening to their hearts after strenuous activity. Children use small tools such as glue sticks and sand equipment, with increasing confidence and coordination.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children enjoy mixing paints for a variety of purposes and explore a range of other materials. The weekly session with a peripatetic music teacher is a firm favourite with all the children and supports the current work topic very effectively. The children also enjoy playing musical bells, following dots to make a familiar tune. They have many good opportunities to express their feelings and use their senses through play in a variety of imaginary, free and structured play experiences.	

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:
- interventions between staff and children during some activities, to ensure that children are enabled to develop skills according to their individual abilities.

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.