



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127658

DfES Number: 519742

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 25/03/2004
Inspector Name Susan Jennifer Scott

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Sunflower Nursery
Setting Address Milton Mount Hall, Old Road East
Gravesend
Kent
DA12 1NQ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Jacqui Pickering

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

Sunflower Day Nursery opened in 1998. It operates from two rooms in Milton Mount Hall which is part of the United Reformed Church, in Gravesend. The day care serves the local area and children from the Medway towns.

There are currently 85 children from two to five years on roll. This includes six funded three-year-olds and sixteen funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special needs and none who speak English as an additional language.

It is open from Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 16:00, term time only, but also opens for four weeks during the summer school holiday for children aged 2.5 years to 8 years from 09.00 to 16:00.

Nine part time members of staff work with the children. Six have early years qualifications to level 2 or 3. Three members of staff are currently on training programmes. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYCDP).

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision at Sunflower Nursery is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff plan varied practical activities, both in and out of doors, although use of the latter is limited during the winter months.

Resources are interesting and well organised so that they link into the theme successfully, enabling children to develop and progress in all areas of learning. Staff ask good questions to encourage children to talk and think about activities so they develop their understanding. Group activities for the funded children are presented in an enthusiastic and lively manner, and spontaneous conversations are extended to provide further challenge in language development and other areas of understanding. Staff observe and record children's learning in each of the six areas; their assessments are evaluated against the stepping stones and early learning goals. As a result, they provide a secure basis on which to plan the next steps in children's learning, and a clear picture of progress to share with parents.

The leadership and management of the nursery is very good. The manager has effectively developed a committed staff team who have a collaborative approach to all aspects of their work. Experienced staff provide support and guidance for newer staff and all are able to participate in various training courses. The manager monitors and reviews the recording systems regularly and evaluates the quality of teaching informally.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents regularly spend time talking informally with staff about their children and a play plan is provided termly for parents to contribute to and comment on. They are informed about activities at the nursery: a daily plan is displayed and they are encouraged to access the curriculum which can be taken home.

What is being done well?

- Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and stepping stones, enabling them to promote children's learning and development effectively by careful assessment and good observations of children's progress;
- Varied activities are provided that are linked well to the theme; these encourage children to use their imagination and extend their learning effectively;
- Children enjoy stories which are read by staff and supported by imaginative props, encouraging concentration and a sense of wonder: the gradual construction of a spider's web during the story about a spider fascinated them;

- Staff provide parents with a good range of information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum and effectively encourage their contributions to the individual play plans.

What needs to be improved?

- The book area, so that it is a quiet, comfortable area to enjoy books independently;
- Children's early reading skills through the display of rotas for various tasks, so that they can refer to these independently;
- Children's opportunities to access the outside play area, on a regular basis at all times of the year.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The group have made excellent progress in further enhancing the opportunities for language and literacy by providing a variety of mark making equipment during each session.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children behave very well, they are interested and enjoy learning. They are encouraged to share and take turns, and be polite and considerate to others. They choose between activities, select resources for themselves, and learn to be independent: they help themselves to tissues and help put away equipment. Children's confidence and self-esteem is effectively encouraged by staff who are sensitive to their needs and know them well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children use language with confidence and enjoyment: they listen to stories, enjoy sharing stories with staff and discussing pictures, text and sounds of words. They have good opportunities to experience a variety of written language and to experiment and explore writing text and numerals. Children recognise their names and are beginning to write these correctly with well-formed letters. They name their own work and value it, placing it with their name card to take home.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children benefit from good individual support to help them count and to recognise shapes, colours and sizes. Their understanding of numbers is reinforced as they take part in routine tasks such as working out the date or playing games. They learn about capacity by using recipes and measuring ingredients. Children are able to learn about sizes, comparisons and simple problem solving during everyday routines and activities, such as measuring worms on charts.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children can make models from a variety of construction kits and are able to explore using glue, tissue and other recycled materials. They have opportunities to explore some technology. The outdoor area and the interest table is used to stimulate children's interest in the natural world. They observe the weather, collect and observe worms and talk about activity in the wormery. This helps them understand changes that occur, such as when the worms eat the leaves on the surface of the wormery.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Indoors children are set challenges: a variety of opportunities are organised which encourage children to use their skills and imagination: they move confidently and safely at their own pace: climbing, rolling and crawling through a variety of large play equipment. They are encouraged to use space well and to recognise when they need this. They use small tools such as pencils, stencils and scissors competently and with independence.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children can participate in singing, making music and they enjoy action rhymes. They have access to varied small world toys which they use independently and in small groups. Children use their imaginative skills well and enjoy role play activities, such as gardening, with a variety of "props" and tools that are interesting and extend their understanding. They learn to apply paint in different ways, with varied tools, exploring colour and texture through a variety of media.

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:

- Points for consideration:
- provide access to a quiet, comfortable area so that children can enjoy books independently;
- provide opportunities for children to develop reading skills through the use of rotas;
- provide regular access to the outside play area, so that children can experience activities outside at all times of the year.

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.