



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127100

DfES Number: 518414

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 05/03/2004
Inspector Name Malini Parmar

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name The Children's Centre Canterbury College
Setting Address New Dover Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 3AJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Canterbury College

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Canterbury College
Address New Dover Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 3AJ

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

The Children's Centre is situated in purpose built premises in the grounds of Canterbury College.

A maximum of 32 children are accommodated aged between 2 and 4 years. The nursery serves students attending the college, staff, and any remaining places are allocated to the public. There are two main playrooms for the two different age groups, a covered outside decking areas, and an outside play area.

There are three staff working directly with 24 funded 3 and 4 year olds. There are currently no children with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. The setting receives support from a teacher and / or mentor from the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA).

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The Children's Centre Canterbury College Nursery provides a range of worthwhile activities in a secure environment and children are making generally good progress overall. Teaching is generally good, the core staff have a firm knowledge of the foundation stage, which enables them to plan and provide a coordinated programme of activities. Staff make detailed observations on the children's progress, which are used to identify children's next steps. These are collated to inform the weekly plans and also contribute to devising a daily focused activity. Focussed activities are used to support two specific learning objectives for each child, which are identified on a termly basis. This system is relatively new and is evolving to make it more refined in order to consistently meet individual needs. Staff employ effective questioning techniques to enable meaningful learning to arise from opportunities provided. Staff plan for indoors and outdoors and children move fluently from area to area. Children work at their own pace and freely select from the variety of opportunities available. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour, and work positively with them. Their support and encouragement is reflected, in the children's generally good behaviour. Children occasionally receive inconsistent opportunities. There are effective procedures in place to support the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and for children with English as an Additional Language. Leadership and Management is generally good. The managers are committed to ensuring children experience high quality care and education. Staff are supported and encouraged to attend regular training. There is an informal system in place to evaluate the settings strengths and weaknesses, and both managers contribute to the planning to ensure effectiveness. Partnership with Parents is generally good. They receive relevant information to enable involvement and access developmental records at consultation.

What is being done well?

- Staff consistently employ useful questioning techniques to enable meaningful learning to arise from opportunities provided.
- Staff provide a warm and caring environment in which the children are confident, happy and settled.
- Children benefit from the carefully coordinated range of opportunities available. They freely select from different activities, which are planned and provided to reinforce the agreed learning objective of the current theme.
- Staff plan for the indoor and outdoor environment and children move freely and fluently from area to area.

What needs to be improved?

- the continued use of assessments to inform planning
- the linking of sounds to letter naming and sounding letters of the alphabet through planned practical activities
- consistency of opportunity throughout the programme of activities to ensure all children receive suitable challenges.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the group were asked to:

Improve the programme of language and literacy by ensuring children have access to relevant books for them to use and enjoy, on their own.

Improve staff's knowledge of the 1994 Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, to enable them to implement the policy that is already in place.

Improve the partnership with parents by encouraging them to contribute to assessments by sharing observations of children's learning at home.

The group have made generally good progress in all three areas. There is now a dedicated Language room, with a wide range of appropriate books. The group now have a member of staff whom has attended relevant training and cascaded this to staff and is familiar with the systems in place to seek further advice and support to help children with Special Educational Needs. Parents are now able to access children's records at programmed consultations and can make arrangements to speak to their children's key worker at any time.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children are confident and secure. They make choices about their play and take initiative. They work independently and collaboratively, taking turns and sharing resources. Children behave well and are familiar with the routine. They show good levels of concentration and motivation in their chosen tasks for example when dressing dolls. Occasionally, challenges set for more able children are not sufficiently exploited due to inconsistencies in the programme.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children speak clearly and confidently as they engage both adults and their friends in conversation. They take pleasure in regularly using words such as "gooey". They listen attentively to stories, enjoy looking at books and use them well. Children receive inconsistent opportunities to recognise their names, label their own work and write for a variety of purposes. Children are not sufficiently encouraged to notice print or link sounds and letters through practical activities.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children learn to count during the session for example counting how many children are present and how many cups we need at lunch times. They confidently count objects, select specific amounts and are able to use mathematical language in their play. They learn about size, shape and measure through practical activities such as sand and water. Children lack opportunities to successfully consolidate their knowledge of numbers due to some inconsistencies in the programme.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children regularly explore and investigate features of the local and wider world through visits to the library and supermarket. This is supported with a regular programme of visitors to the nursery. Children clearly enjoy using the good variety of programmable toys. They eagerly explore the buttons on the recorder. Children carefully make models, and are adept at using glue and string to join recycled materials. Children receive inconsistent opportunities to develop a sense of time.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

A range of indoor and outdoor activities help children to gain control, co-ordination and spatial awareness. They move fluently and safely from indoor and outdoor environments. Children regularly use tools and equipment such as scissors, to develop control and dexterity. Children move freely; they enjoy balancing along the beam and hopping around the yard. They skilfully manoeuvre around objects to stay safe. Children receive inconsistent opportunities to raise their health and bodily awareness.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children are provided with regular opportunities to explore a range of materials. They eagerly paint and play with sand and water to communicate their thoughts ideas and feelings. Children participate enthusiastically in the regular movement and song sessions. Role-play activities are varied and interesting. Children enjoy playing in "the doctors surgery" although the quality of their play varies with the amount of support they are given.

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

- provide consistent opportunities for children throughout the routine to ensure all opportunities are equally exploited for all children to receive consistently suitable challenges
- continue to increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals in all six areas of the curriculum.
- increase children's awareness of print, the sounds of letters and words through planned practical activities.

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.