



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127341

DfES Number: 510383

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	05/05/2004
Inspector Name	Christine Robinson

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Little Scholars Nursery - Shadoxhurst
Setting Address	Shadoxhurst Village Hall Shadoxhurst Ashford Kent TN26 1HW

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Little Scholars
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Little Scholars
Address	Shadoxhurst Village Hall Shadoxhurst Ashford Kent TN26 1HW

## 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

Little Scholars Nursery opened in 1997. The nursery and its companion nursery at High Halden is managed by a parent committee, which is a registered charity. It delegates the responsibility for the day-to-day running of the group to the two managers. It operates from the village hall in Shadoxhurst, a village between Ashford and Bethersden. It serves the local rural area and some children also attend from the Park Farm area in Ashford.

There are currently 35 children from two to four years on roll. This includes 19 funded 3 year olds and 7 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions and times. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs; all children speak English.

The group opens five days a week during school term-times. Sessions are from 09:00-15:30 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and from 09:00-12:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

There are four staff working with the children and also additional lunch-time cover. Three staff have early years qualifications to NVQ 3 and three staff are training. The setting receives support from an early years advisory teacher. It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

### How good is the Day Care?

Little Scholars Nursery provides good quality care for children. The senior staff have a long-term working relationship which provides children with a sense of consistency and security. Children have plenty of space to play in the bright and warm hall with a wide range of high quality toys and equipment. However, the lack of low-level storage hampers children's ability to self-select their own resources. Records and policies are well organised and held securely and most contain the required details.

There is a good awareness of health and safety issues but the poor condition of the toilet floors does not allow them to be cleaned hygienically. Staff have a general

understanding of equal opportunity issues but there is an insufficient range of resources to help promote ideas of cultural diversity and anti-discriminatory practice. Staff are aware of child protection issues and are very aware of meeting children's individual needs, including those who have special educational needs.

Staff interact with children in a positive way and as a result, children enjoy their play and develop concentration. Appropriate strategies, such as the use of praise and encouragement, are used to manage children's behaviour effectively.

Staff welcome parents into the group and parents are able to make their views felt through serving on the management committee. They are kept well informed about the setting and about their children's progress.

### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

At the last inspection in 2002, nine actions were imposed. One of the managers of the nursery is now the person-in-charge. She is familiar with the National Standards and is committed to ensuring that other staff are also familiar with the Standards. She has produced an operational plan that reflects the practice in the nursery and it is now made available to parents. It contains a set of revised policies, including an updated complaints procedure and also includes a system of risk assessment.

One action concerned the provision of comprehensive activity planning; this has not been done effectively and forms part of the key issue to the S122 inspection report. This inspection was completed at the same time as the care inspection.

The remaining four actions concerned health and hygiene issues. Regulated hot water is now available to the cloakroom basins, door stoppers have been fitted to the toilet doors so that children cannot lock themselves in and a grid has been fitted to the outside drain in the play area. An environmental health officer has made a visit to the nursery and made a recommendation about the condition of the toilet floors. This has not been followed and is imposed as a recommendation at this inspection.

### **What is being done well?**

- The play room is clean and bright with displays of interesting pictures and craft-work. Staff arrange the space to enable all ages of children to experience different types of play within a welcoming environment.
- The managers promote the value of staff training and staff are encouraged to complete full early years qualifications and also attend short courses. The manager and one of the supervisors are currently completing an NVQ 4 in management.
- Staff are very aware of meeting the needs of children with any special dietary need. The nursery promotes healthy eating by providing a range of snacks that include fruit, celery, carrots and cheese.
- The staff are proactive in promoting the welfare and development of children with additional educational needs in line with the Code of Practice. There is liaison with other professional agencies and where appropriate, individual

play plans are implemented that set out achievable targets for children.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- the opportunities for children to select their own resources
- the condition of the toilet floors
- the content of the child protection statement
- the range of resources that promote cultural diversity and anti-discriminatory practice.

#### **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
5	Consider ways to improve the choice/storage of toys and equipment to enable children to self-select resources and become independent learners.
7	Improve the condition of the toilet floors to enable them to be maintained hygienically.
13	Ensure the child protection statement includes the procedures to follow where there are allegations against members of staff.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Little Scholars Nursery provides children with an environment where they can learn through play. The provision is acceptable and of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals and in mathematical development, they are making very good progress.

The quality of teaching is generally good and staff have a satisfactory understanding of the early learning goals. They interact well with children and provide them with a wide range of activities. There is a good balance of free and structured play and children behave well in response to staff involvement in their play.

Since September 2003, there has been no purposeful system to assess children's progress. A new system has been introduced but there is insufficient evidence that it is being used effectively. Similarly, staff have struggled to find a planning system that meets their needs. It has been recently changed and is now in line with the stepping stones and all six early learning goals.

Leadership and management is generally good. There are regular staff meetings and appraisals and relationships are building with three primary schools. Staff at all levels take advantage of a variety of training opportunities to improve their practice. In the past year, the managers' attention has been diverted towards its companion nursery, which has meant that weaknesses in the planning and assessment systems have not been effectively identified. However, this has now been recognised and an action-plan has been put in place to address this recently.

Partnership with parents is generally good. They are kept well informed about the nursery through a set of revised policies and regular newsletters and staff take part in the transfer document scheme. There are annual parent consultations and they are encouraged to bring in items to support topic work. However the lack of information about the Foundation Stage means they are not fully involved in their children's learning.

### What is being done well?

- Staff are effective in encouraging children's growing language skills and as a result, children are fluent speakers and can use language for a variety of purposes. Children enjoy listening to stories and staff use this interest to develop children's recall and to introduce new words.
- Staff give children good individual support, helping children to count and to notice shape, colour and size through using a good range of quality toys such as manipulative beads and magnetic numbers. They reinforce ideas about number and shape through incidental opportunities such as counting the number of boys and girls at register-time and craft activities like potato printing.

- Staff develop effective relationships with children and provide good role-models. They set clear boundaries for children's behaviour and consequently children respond well to staff instruction and behave well.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- the way worksheets are used
- the opportunities for children to have an awareness of their own culture and beliefs and those of other people
- the development and consolidation of assessment and planning systems
- the written information for parents about the Foundation Stage.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

At the last inspection in July 2000, three key issues were identified. Overall, progress on these issues has been generally good, although progress on the second issue has been limited.

The first issue concerned the need to include more work on identifying rhymes and letter patterns by sound. The nursery has now purchased more games and books and staff are aware of the need to promote this aspect of language and literacy in small group-work and at story and register-times.

The second issue concerned the lack of involvement of all staff in the planning process. Up until recently, progress has been limited and further development on this matter is recommended as a further key issue.

The third issue related to the lack of space for displaying children's work and the lack of opportunities for children to handle objects. Children's work and posters and pictures are now displayed and parents are asked to help children provide items for regular interest tables that support topic work.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have good relationships with staff and each other and respond well to staff instruction. Children are becoming independent by practising dressing for P.E. and by helping to tidy up. They are able to co-operate with other children in small and large groups and enjoy the security of familiar routines. The lack of opportunities for children to select their own resources has an impact on their development as independent learners.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children speak clearly and fluently as a result of the staff's consistent interest and engagement in their play and conversation, especially through the use of songs, stories and rhymes. Children learn to negotiate and express their feelings during role-play situations such as 'going to the vets'. The use of pre-prepared worksheets does not effectively enhance children's ability to form letters and write independently at their own level.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Many children can count to 10 and some older children can count beyond this spontaneously. Children learn about shape, size and pattern through a variety of activities such as construction, puzzles and by using early years number programmes on the computer. Children learn about the concepts of addition and subtraction through practical activities such as counting backwards in counting songs.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are introduced to aspects of the natural world by noticing changes in the weather and show a sense of wonder when they discuss how seeds they have planted are growing. Children are encouraged to talk about their families and events in their lives and learn about their environment by occasional local outings to, for example, the post-office. Children's knowledge of cultural diversity has been limited in the past by superficial planning and a poor range of multi-cultural resources.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children show an increasing control in the use of a variety of tools and many children demonstrate good hand/eye co-ordination skills. Children enjoy playing outside in the summer and there are regular opportunities for children to exercise their bodies in the hall throughout the year. They confidently use a wide range of equipment and enjoy parachute play learning the concepts of under and over and the principles of team-work.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children are familiar with nursery songs and enjoy moving to action rhymes. Children have regular opportunities to explore colour, texture and shape when playing with paint, dough, water, sand and peat. The role-play area is regularly changed to ensure children are able to act out a variety of imaginary situations.	
<b>Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.</b>	



### **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**

- review the use of worksheets to ensure that where they are used, they reinforce children's skills appropriately, especially with regard to the teaching of writing
- extend opportunities for children to have an awareness of their own culture and beliefs and those of other people
- develop and consolidate the new procedures for the assessment and planning for children's individual learning needs
- extend the written information for parents on the Foundation Stage.

*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.*