



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127367

DfES Number: 522332

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 23/09/2004
Inspector Name Susan Jennifer Scott

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Marden Pre - School Playgroup
Setting Address Memorial Hall
Goudhurst Road, Marden
Tonbridge
Kent
TN12 9JX

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Marden Pre - School Playgroup 801721

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Marden Pre - School Playgroup
Address Memorial Hall
Goudhurst Road, Marden
Tonbridge
Kent
TN12 9JX

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

Marden Pre-School opened in 1979. It operates from a large room in the memorial hall in the village of Marden.

The Pre-School have a small outdoor area but this is out of operation at the moment until it is made safe again. The Pre-School serves the local area.

There are currently 65 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 33 funded three-year-olds and 17 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs, though none speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five mornings a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00

There are 11 part time staff who work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3.

The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). .

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 Marden Pre-School playgroup is acceptable and of good quality.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff understand the Foundation Stage and offer a good range of activities. They take turns to plan and prepare weekly activities which focus on a specific learning intention and record children's progress in completing the activity. These evaluations provide the basis of assessments and assist staff to identify the children's next steps in learning. Children experience a good balance of unstructured play and adult led activities. There are occasions when activities promoted in the "risers" groups do not provide children with the most effective learning opportunities.

During whole group routines and activities such as registration and "circle" times many of the younger children do not have appropriate opportunities to participate or be challenged. Staff provide resources and support for children with English as an additional language and children who are identified as having special educational needs.

Leadership and management of the setting is generally good. Planning is shared amongst the staff team. Staff are encouraged to identify their training needs and appraisals are used to confirm and to plan to meet these through a variety of opportunities. There is not a rigorous system to review and evaluate practice, though staff identify strengths and weaknesses of the provision on an informal basis.

Partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents are happy with the education provided for their children. Staff provide frequent verbal feedback on children's development, and regular and flexible opportunities to ensure parents access the records and are involved in their child's learning. Parents receive newsletters and are invited to attend introductory sessions.

What is being done well?

- Staff plan a variety of well linked play resources so that these encourage and extend imaginary play; the dressing up clothes, play "house" and "props" support children's understanding of the topic effectively.
- A well resourced book area is provided and staff frequently spend time reading to children and sharing books with them which successfully fosters children's interest in stories and language.
- Staff work well as a team; trained staff work alongside less experienced staff to offer support and guidance.

What needs to be improved?

- the opportunities for all children to be engaged, challenged and stimulated throughout the activities and routines
- teaching methods for risers groups, so that children experience appropriate and challenging ways of learning to write and good pencil control
- the frequency of opportunities for children to be engaged in vigorous physical activities and to develop their large muscle skills
- the opportunities for children to count, identify quantities and solve simple mathematical problems.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The Pre-School have made generally good progress on the issues for improvement noted at the last inspection.

They were required to:

state the intended learning outcomes for planned and routine activities, relating the learning directly to the desirable learning outcomes in the six areas. Ensure that all criteria are covered, prioritising personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics. Ensure all staff are included in planning to assist their knowledge of how to promote the desirable learning outcomes;

review the second part of the session's timetable to ensure better adult deployment, grouping of children and interaction.

Staff now identify the intended learning outcomes for activities and routines in all six areas of learning and promote these through a balance of adult led and unstructured activities. The staff reference activities and routines to the stepping stones and early learning goals. All staff participate in planning the curriculum.

Staff prioritize the personal and social skills of the children through good use of a snack bar routine. Language and literacy are promoted very effectively through well supported use of the book corner. Mathematics is prioritized through routines such as "colour of the week" and registration routines when staff and children are counted.

The Pre-School have reviewed the sessional timetable and reorganised the snack time routine to provide good support for small groups of children who choose when they use this. Adults are deployed effectively delivering the planned activities, supervising and supporting the "risers" group and moving between groups of children offering them opportunities to extend their play.

An element of this issue of developing small group work continues in the key issue identified for this inspection so that all children are engaged, challenged and stimulated throughout the activities and routines.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are developing in their independence through effective routines: they pour their own drinks, select resources for themselves, and behave very well. They learn about their own culture and community through an imaginative programme of visits and visitors. Children share and take turns, and help staff to tidy up during the routines. Whole group activities do not often effectively encourage children's confidence.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy looking at books and having stories read to them. Children have good opportunities for mark making and are sometimes encouraged to write their names on work, but activities such as role play are not fully exploited to include a variety of examples of written information to use. Children are developing their language for thinking and have good discussions with staff who ask good questions. Children enjoy regular singing participate with great enthusiasm.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children benefit from good individual support to count and to recognise shapes, numbers and sizes during planned activities. During free play they talk confidently about the quantities of playdough they are using, its colour and the patterns they make with cutters. Opportunities to discuss weight and quantity are not consistently exploited. Children enjoy action songs and many of them are confidently able to predict, guess, count and add up when they perform the actions.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy talking about events in their lives and staff extend discussions with children during the activities and routines such as the snack bar. They learn about a limited variety of beliefs through the programme. Children explore and investigate although they are not able to benefit from regular use of the garden to explore natural and living things. Children are developing a good range of skills using a range of programmable toys, especially the computer.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are developing and refining their fine motor skills through daily routines and activities; many children demonstrate dexterity for example, when using cutting and rolling dough and pouring their drinks. They do not have sufficient opportunities to be challenged during vigorous physical activity within the daily sessions. Children are able to move freely within the hall and show a good awareness of themselves and others. They enjoy regular and lively movement and music activities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Children have very good opportunities to freely experiment with a variety of textures, materials and resources. They communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings through well organised role play: dressing up clothes, the play "house" and other props are successfully linked in the programme. Children enjoy access to a range of materials and tools enabling them to communicate through art, design, role play and music and movement.

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 more opportunities for all children to be engaged, challenged and stimulated throughout all activities and routines;
- use more activities identified in the Foundation Stage curriculum for the "risers" groups, so that children experience appropriate and challenging ways of learning to write and good pencil control;
- provide frequent opportunities to develop children's large muscle skills within the sessions and engage in vigorous physical activities;
- exploit more opportunities to count, identify quantities and solve simple mathematical problems.

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.