



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 131554

DfES Number: 517830

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 02/11/2004
Inspector Name Gill Moore

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Regents Park Pre-School
Setting Address Tanners Brook Middle School
Elmes Drive, Regents Park
Southampton
Hampshire
SO15 4PH

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Regents Park Pre-School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Regents Park Pre-School
Address Tanners Brook Middle School
Elmes Drive, Regents Park
Southampton
Hampshire
SO15 4PH

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

Regents Park Community Pre-School is a committee run group and has been opened since 1989. It operates from two large inter-connected play rooms, each with adjacent toilet facilities, including a disabled toilet, and an enclosed outdoor area. The pre-school is situated in the grounds of Tanners Brook Schools in the residential area of Regents Park. It serves the local and surrounding residential areas.

There are currently 50 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 31 funded 3 year olds and 8 funded 4 year olds. The pre-school supports children with special needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. The group operates Monday to Friday 09:05 - 11:35 and 12:30 and 15:00 during the school term.

The committee employ a qualified lead practitioner to be responsible for the day to day running of the group. In addition, 8 staff work closely with the children, 3 of whom are qualified. The remaining 5 staff are currently working towards a recognised early years and child care qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local early years partnership and has established strong links with the schools, in which it is based. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and was awarded accreditation in 2003.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Regents Park Pre-School offers good quality nursery education, where children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good with some very good aspects and staff have a secure knowledge of the early learning goals. They assess children's learning against the stepping stones; however, this information is not used to plan the next stage in their learning. Support is provided to all children and staff develop secure relationships with them, although staff's knowledge of the code of practice and systems to monitor the progress children with special educational needs make are not fully developed. Staff use a variety of teaching methods to sustain children's interest, although older and more able children are not sufficiently challenged across all sessions, in particular relating to mathematical development. Resources are used effectively, however the accessibility of some, and the use of space, does not enable children to access the full range of equipment independently.

Leadership and management are generally good. Excellent communication is in place between the committee and staff and clear roles and responsibilities are defined. Staff recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-school and act on their own evaluations and advice from relevant professionals, to make improvements. Effective systems are in place to monitor teaching, although the systems to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum planning in relation to children's individual progress are not fully developed.

The partnerships with parents are very good. Parents receive detailed information about the curriculum and are well informed about what their child is involved in on a daily basis. They have good opportunities to share what they know about their child and discuss their individual progress. Positive relationships are developed between parents and staff and parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning

What is being done well?

- Staff interact well with children and use effective questioning techniques to encourage them to try new experiences and think things through by themselves. They listen to children and value what they have to say. Staff have knowledge of children's individual needs and home circumstances and establish very good relationships with them.
- Children develop high levels of confidence and independence and their behaviour is very good. The daily routine allows children to make their own decisions about their learning and the areas in which they play. Staff encourage them to complete tasks for themselves and solve their own problems. Continual praise and encouragement from staff has a positive impact on children's confidence and self-esteem.

- Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. They are helped to understand about the foundation stage of learning and how children make progress towards the early learning goals. Information is provided about pre-school topics and suggestions of activities to try at home with their child to extend their learning. Parents receive information about their child's achievements every half term and are encouraged to contribute to their written assessments.
- High priority is given to staff performance and development. Staff appraisals and self-assessments are undertaken and all staff are actively encouraged to pursue training opportunities. All staff contribute to the planning and evaluating of activities and show a strong commitment to continually assessing and improving the provision for all children.
- Staff provide many opportunities for children to learn about a range of cultures. Children learn about a variety of celebrations from different cultures through practical activities, such as making Divali lamps and decorating hands with patterns, and through the use of information books and discussion. They learn about different countries and the world around them through topic work, for example holidays.

What needs to be improved?

- the use of children's assessments, to ensure they are used to move children on to the next stage in their learning and sufficient challenges are provided for the older and more able children across all sessions
- the use of space and the accessibility of resources, to enable children to independently access the full range of equipment, in particular with regards to creative activities, tools and materials, construction equipment and mathematical resources
- staff's knowledge of the code of practice, records for monitoring the progress children with special educational needs make and the systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational programme and the impact this has on children's progress
- opportunities for children to practice and develop their understanding of addition and subtraction and independently access a range of mathematical equipment to support their learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre-school has made generally good progress since the last inspection.

They were asked to extend curriculum planning, so that plans show clearly what children should be learning from the activities provided. The system for planning has been improved to show clear links between the stepping stones and highlight what children are expected to learn from each activity. Prompt cards displayed around the pre-school highlight to staff how children's learning can be extended through the use of resources in each area.

The group were also asked to develop the assessment records so that they show children's progress towards the early learning goals, identify their learning needs and share these with parents enabling them to be more involved in their child's learning. The system for recording children's achievements has been developed to include children's progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Effective systems are in place to share these with parents and they are invited to make contributions to them, ensuring they are kept informed about their child's individual achievements and progress. The links between children's assessments and planning the next stage for their learning are not yet fully developed.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children show good concentration and perseverance and respond well to challenging activities. They learn to co-operate with one another and work as part of a group, as well as taking initiative when working independently. Children develop good relationships with their peers and are sensitive to each other's feelings. They are confident and show good independence and enjoy making choices about their play. Children are interested in activities and show a positive approach to learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children's speaking and listening skills are well developed and they use a good range of vocabulary to describe their play and suggest ideas. They learn names and sounds of letters, for example through recognition of name cards and letter of the week, and suggest words that begin with the same sound. Children enjoy exploring books and learn how to use these to locate information. They practice emergent writing in various situations and are beginning to develop very good handwriting skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident in counting and are able to recognise numerals. They use good mathematical language to talk about shapes and sizes and engage in a wide range of practical activities to explore weight and measure, although are not able to independently access the full range of mathematical resources. Children develop early addition and subtraction skills through planned activities, however their understanding of this is not always re-enforced through routines and self-chosen play.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy many activities using their senses to observe changes and are interested in why things happen and how they work. They confidently build and design models from construction materials presented to them. Children talk about past and present events and develop a good concept of time. They learn about their local environment and the world around them and explore a range of cultures and beliefs. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support children's learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children develop confidence and demonstrate good co-ordination as they ride bicycles, use climbing apparatus and crawl through tunnels. They show an awareness of space through participating in music and movement and circle games. Physical activities are well planned and children use a good range of large and small equipment. Staff provide opportunities for children to use tools and materials and they handle these well, for example scissors, threading cotton reels and moulding dough.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children enjoy communicating and expressing their imagination through role-play, dance and telling stories. They participate in singing sessions and learn about rhythm and sound patterns using their bodies and musical instruments. Children have opportunities to use a wide range of media and materials in two and three dimensions and enjoy art and craft activities. However, these tend to be adult-led and children are not able to independently access resources to freely explore creativity.

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

- ensure children's assessments are used to plan for the next stage in their learning and sufficient challenges are provided to the older and more able children across all sessions
- evaluate and improve the use of space and the accessibility of resources to enable children to independently access the full range of equipment
- increase opportunities for children to practice and develop their understanding of addition and subtraction and independently access a range of mathematical equipment.

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.