



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 221801

DfES Number: 581441

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 31/01/2005
Inspector Name Heidi Falconer

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Litlington Playschool
Setting Address Village Hall
Meeting Lane, Litlington
Royston
Hertfordshire
SG8 0QF

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Litlington Playschool 1022378

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Litlington Playschool
Address Village Hall
Meeting Lane, Litlington
Royston
Hertfordshire
SG8 0QF

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

Litlington Playschool opened in 1985 and operates from 1 room in a village hall. It is situated in the village Litlington on the outskirts of Royston. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playschool at any one time. The playschool is open Monday to Thursday from 09:15 to 12:00 during school term times .

There are currently 40 children from 2 to 4 years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a local area. The playschool supports children with special educational needs.

The playschool employs ten staff, one of whom is a administrator. Three of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are working towards a qualification.

How good is the Day Care?

Litlington Playschool provides satisfactory care for children.

Staff work hard to create a warm and welcoming environment for children and parents. Children are greeted warmly on arrival and they make the environment welcoming by disguising unused furniture with attractive children's posters and by displaying portfolios of activities in the entrance area. Play space is adapted well throughout the session and each day to provided appropriate space for children during different activities. Staff are showing a commitment to the practice by attending further training. All of the required documentation is in place although some lacks the necessary detail.

Staff promote good hygiene practices and have an awareness of health issues ensure that the spread of infection is minimised. Staff are aware of potential hazards and ensure that risks to children are minimised however staff are not always vigilant about ensuring that the premises are secure. Staff are aware of all children's dietary and medical needs and procedures are in place to ensure that these needs are met.

Children take part in a range of activities which ensures that they are busy and active throughout the session. All children have opportunities to experience a variety of media play e.g. shaving foam, playdough and paint. Children enjoy these activities and talk freely about their observations. Behaviour is generally good, and the different age groups mix well together. Staff have a warm and calm approach and are developing good relationships with children. This helps children to feel secure and confident.

Staff communicate appropriately with parents and have developed good working relationships with them. This ensures that they are informed about the provision and their child. Parents are encouraged to approach staff at any time. Parents are pleased with the quality of care provided for the children at play school.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the group were asked to improve documentation. The group now record the arrival and departure times of children and visitors and have produced policies on sick children, no smoking, behaviour management and complaints. These promote children's welfare, care and learning. The group have also ensured that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times. This ensure that children are able to take regular drinks when they need them.

At the last inspection the group were given two actions regarding the resources and play opportunities available. The group have now developed their resources and activities to enable them to provide a wide range of activities for all children.

The group have not yet developed an effective system for risk assessment however they do identify potential hazards to children to ensure that the environment is safe.

What is being done well?

- Staff work hard to create a warm and friendly environment where parents feel welcome and part of the group. At the beginning of each session parents and carers are able to stay for a coffee and to settle their children in. Parents are able to help in the group each day.
- Children in the group are happy and confident. They are forming good relationships with each other and they enjoy the range of activities which the group provide.
- Staff provide children with a wide range of activities especially opportunities to explore different types of media e.g. shaving foam, mixing bird seed and playdough. Children enjoy these activities and talk freely about what they can see and feel.

What needs to be improved?

- risk assessments, with regard to ensuring that they are carried out on a regular basis and that where risks have been identified records show how

these have been reduced

- documentation, with regard to ensuring that the complaints, uncollected and lost child policies contain the appropriate information
- security of the premises, to ensure that there is an effective procedure in place to ensure that the premises remain secure and that children are unable to leave them unattended

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

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
6	Develop a effective procedure to ensure that the premises remain secure at all times and that children are unable to leave them unattended
6	Develop risk assessments of the premises identifying actions to be taken to minimize identified risks. Where risks have been identified a action plan, with time scales should identify action to be taken to minimise identified risks.
14	Develop policies for complaints, uncollected and lost children to ensure that they contain the appropriate information.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision at Litlington Playschool is acceptable. It enables children to make generally good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and their physical development but has some significant weaknesses in other areas.

The quality of teaching has significant weaknesses. Staff provide children with a wide range of activities however they do not make the most of them or ask questions which challenge children to develop their own ideas or solve problems. Staff know the children well and children's behaviour is generally good, however in large groups children's attention is lost therefore the learning environment is not always effective.

Short term planning is not related to early learning goals and does not show clear learning intentions. There is insufficient detail on plans to enable staff to make best use of activities and experiences to promote learning for all children. Staff have limited knowledge of the purpose these activities. Medium term plans show the intended learning of focused activities but not how staff will support this.

Assessments do not clearly show what children have learnt and are not sufficiently used to show next steps in children's learning.

Leadership and management has significant weaknesses. There is a system in place for staff appraisals and some staff are showing a commitment to developing their practice. There is no formal system in place to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the setting, and the committee are unclear about the education provision the group must provide.

Partnership with parents has significant weaknesses. Parents speak highly of the setting and they have developed good relationships with staff. Parents find staff approachable however there is limited information given to parents about the early learning goals and the progress their children are making towards them. Some parents do not feel informed about the education side of their child's day.

What is being done well?

- Children in the setting are happy and secure. Children are developing good relationships with each other and staff. Children play cooperatively together and staff encourage them to share, take turns and negotiate their play with each other.
- Staff provide children with opportunities to develop their sense of community, using their local community as a starting point. The group invite visitors from the local community e.g. dentists and people from the local Army.
- Staff provide children with opportunities to explore a wide range of media. Children visibly enjoy opportunities to play activities such as playdough,

spaghetti and shaving foam.

What needs to be improved?

- the system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the educational provision and the use of these assessments to identify areas for further development and staff training
- staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation stage to enable them to make best use of everyday routines and activities to extend children's learning across all areas of the curriculum
- curriculum planning using the early learning goals and stepping stones, so that plans provide sufficient detail to ensure that staff have a good understanding of the purpose of activities
- assessments to ensure that they are used to inform the children's next steps and to inform planning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection there has been limited progress . The group were asked to develop ways of helping children to listen, concentrate and participate appropriately when working in larger groups. The group have tried different ways of managing large group times however these methods have not been effective and children quickly become distracted when they are not actively involved.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Most children separate from their carers happily, staff support children until they are able to support from their carers with confidence. Independence skills are not always fostered sufficiently. Children have few responsibilities to select equipment for themselves and art and craft activities have high levels of adult intervention. Children concentrate and sit quietly at self chosen activities, however some children become quickly unsettled at group times when they are not actively involved.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children are learning to recognise their names on arrival and during every day routines. Some children are able to write their names however this is not always encouraged or extended. Children enjoy sharing books with staff in small groups and access books independently, using them correctly. Staff miss opportunities to help children link sounds to letters during everyday routines. Children speak confidently in groups but do not always listen well.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Staff miss opportunities to use daily routines to develop mathematical thinking e.g. counting cups at snack times. Some comparative language is being used by children but staff do not extend this for older or more older children. Few opportunities are provided for children to develop early calculation skills or to solve simple number problems. There are some planned activities for children to match and compare shapes, measure and weigh objects.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Staff provide children with positive experiences of their own and other cultures. There are few opportunities for children to develop design and construction skills as a free choice activity or to discover methods of joining and how things work. There are few opportunities for children to investigate and explore for themselves. Children talk about future or planned events. Opportunities for children to develop IT skills are limited as is the use of everyday technology.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move confidently indoors, showing an awareness of space during music and movement sessions and when riding wheeled toys. Children are given opportunities to use small equipment and are using equipment such as scissors with good control. Children are developing skills such as throwing and catching through planned activities. Children actively enjoy the regular music and movement sessions in the group.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Some staff encourage children to respond to what they see, feel and touch. Craft activities are adult lead with children producing very similar art work. There are insufficient opportunities for children to freely choose materials to stick and construct with. There is limited access to role play during each session which limits children's developing imagination. Children enjoy the wide range of media they are able to explore in planned activities. Children enjoy moving to music.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- develop a formal system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision for nursery education and use these assessments to identify areas for further development and staff training needs
- develop a system of planning, which covers the six areas of learning sufficiently, and that shows how assessment is used effectively to plan the next steps of learning for individual children
- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage to enable them to make best use of activities and experiences to promote learning for all children.

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.