



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127720

DfES Number: 521868

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 13/04/2004
Inspector Name Susan Jennifer Scott

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Toad Hall Nursery
Setting Address 83 St. Lukes Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 5AS

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Just Learning Ltd
Address 45 High Street
West Malling
ME19 6QH

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

Toad Hall Day Nursery opened in 1996. It is one of over 50 privately owned (Just Learning) nurseries across the country. The nursery manager is responsible for the organisation of staff and the educational provision. The nursery operates from the ground floor of a large house in Maidstone. The nursery serves children from the local area.

There are currently 52 children from 3 months to five years on roll. This includes 10 funded three years olds and 9 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions and from a large catchment area. Some children have special needs and the group supports children who have English as an additional language.

The group opens for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 18.00.

Eight part and full time staff work with the children. Six members of staff have an early years qualification at level two or three. 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 Toad Hall Nursery is acceptable and of good quality. Children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals in physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world and very good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff plan a variety of practical activities, understanding what children learn from them and developing children's confidence well. Resources are effectively organised to link into the curriculum. Staff develop children's understanding by planning appropriate activities and enabling children to experience a sense of achievement. Group activities for the funded children are presented in an enthusiastic and appropriate manner, although use of the outdoor environment is sometimes limited.

Staff observe and make notes of children's learning in each of the six areas. Their assessments are recorded and evaluated against the stepping stones and early learning goals. These provide a secure basis on which to plan the next steps in children's learning. Parents can contribute to these records by sharing information on children's progress which staff take note of.

The leadership and management of the group is generally good. The two staff working with funded children are supported by the manager and collaborate with other staff working in other nurseries in the chain. Staff constantly review and informally assess the provision but there is not yet a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents spend time talking informally to staff about their children and are well informed about the daily sessions. They are given good information about the educational provision and can look at children's work and assessment profiles by request but there is not a system to ensure all parents can contribute to assessments of their children's progress.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. They are lively, enthusiastic, well motivated, confident and articulate with healthy self esteem;
- Staff provide very good practical opportunities for children to understand mathematical concepts of numbers, simple addition and subtraction, differences, shapes and colours. This enables children to develop a good understanding and make good progress.
- Staff have a good understanding of the stepping stones and early learning goals; they work well together and effectively promote children's development

and progress through well planned learning activities;

- There are good systems for supporting staff, evaluating their plans and delivery of learning opportunities and for appraising staff. The manager has enabled staff to form an effective team.

What needs to be improved?

- the regularity of opportunities children have to be challenged and stimulated by activities in the outdoor environment to improve their physical skills and to extend their experience of the outside world;
- the provision for children's everyday experience of diversity;
- the opportunities for all parents to contribute to the planning and assessments for all children.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Good progress has been made in implementing the action plan written as a result of the previous inspection in August 1999, and there has been an improvement in the quality of provision.

Three key issues were identified:

i) the programme for language and literacy to give children more encouragement to use and enjoy books by displaying books so they can be easily seen and are more accessible, ii) to increase opportunities for children to recognise letters of the alphabet by shape and sound, iii) improve staff understanding of equal opportunities by developing a policy which relates to the curriculum that is provided for the children.

These three key issues have been addressed well and some good progress has been made in the area of physical development, although the indoor areas have restricted space in which to develop children's physical skills and staff do not consistently make effective use of the outdoor area.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children are confident and becoming independent. They are able to express opinions, ideas and voice their needs, as one child did when helping to clear up and dropped the duplo board "I think I need help." They choose toys and equipment for themselves and are familiar with the routines. They behave well as they work and play on their own, and in small and large groups. The children concentrate very well as they work independently and in small groups on self-chosen activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy listening to stories and using the books independently. They interpret and predict text, converse about their experiences, and describe their needs. They practise forming letters and learn to read and write their names without help. They use role play activities with varied and imaginative mark making provision enthusiastically. They follow instructions carefully and discuss the current topic with confidence. They are effectively encouraged to develop their vocabulary.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are given good opportunities to sort, match, count, order and sequence. They enjoy challenging jigsaw puzzles and can identify a range of colours. They identify numbers up to nine into the correct order, match numbers to pictures, identify the odd one out in a set, and count the number of children present at the group. Each day they count how many boys and girls are present, they then calculate how many altogether and add or subtract children who arrive later.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children choose from different recycled materials to design and build their own models, make mobiles, cards and baskets during planned activities. They have good access to computers and technical toys and are confident in using software by themselves to complete mathematical activities and to identify letters of the alphabet. The children complete an 'Occupations' project, during which they talk about their families and their homes and have some access to multi cultural resources.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children enjoy the opportunities for climbing, balancing and jumping, but these activities are often limited by using indoor equipment which does not sufficiently extend or challenge children. Children develop good hand and finger control by using a variety of tools like pencils and scissors. They use puzzles well, build with wooden bricks and knead play dough with increasing control. Children participate in traditional circle games and keep fit, music and movement sessions.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children enjoy varied opportunities to play musical instruments and dance, and to sing. They make collage pictures, play with sand and water, dress up, explore and use role-play opportunities with great enthusiasm. Children respond to what they smell, touch, feel and hear as they play with sand and water, They explore painting techniques and mix paints together to make new colours. They are able to express their feelings and ideas through a variety of media.

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 have regular opportunities to be challenged and stimulated by activities in the outdoor environment to improve their physical skills and to extend their experience of the outside world;
- provide a range of resources so that children can have positive experiences of diverse cultures, ethnicity and disability;
- provide systematic opportunities for all parents to contribute to the planning and assessments 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.