



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 203873

DfES Number: 518337

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 04/03/2005
Inspector Name Julie Ann Birkett

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Malyons Preschool Playgroup
Setting Address Northlands Park
Community Hall, Felmores
Basildon
Essex
SS13 1SD

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Maylons Pre-School 1063488

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Maylons Pre-School
Address Northlands Park
Community Hall, Felmores
Basildon
Essex
SS13 1SD

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

Malyons Pre-school opened in 1983 and is committee run. The pre-school operates from two rooms in the Northlands Park Community Hall. It is situated in the Felmores area of Basildon.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:20 to 11:50 and on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 12:20 to 14:50 for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 43 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these 30 receive funding for nursery education. Children generally come from the local catchment area.

The pre-school employs seven staff. Three of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three members of staff are working towards a qualification or further qualification.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for pre-school education at Malyons Pre-school is good overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in four of the six areas of learning but there are some significant weaknesses in Knowledge and Understanding of the World and Creative Development.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a generally good understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning. They use long, medium and short term plans to plan and deliver a range of activities and experiences over a period of time. However the daily programme of activities is limited and children can lack motivation to engage in purposeful play. Planning does not often show how the needs of the less and more able children will be met.

Sessions are organised to include both free play and adult led activities. All staff are actively involved with the children throughout the sessions. They are flexible to meet the children's needs and to act upon spontaneous events, for example, a snowy day. Staff are interested in what the children say and do and encourage conversation with the children. Staff and children build good relationships and all work together in good humour.

Staff make regular observations and record the children's progress. These records are not directly linked to the stepping stones and it is not evident therefore, how the children make progress against them. This also results in some aspects of the educational programme being given less emphasis.

Leadership and management is generally good. Committee and staff meet to discuss and review pre-school practice. Staff have daily meetings. The staff are a strong team and complement each others strengths.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Displays inform parents about the Foundation Stage of learning. Newsletters include the next planned topics so that parents can support children at home. Children's assessment records are available to parents.

What is being done well?

- Staff are warm and caring and sensitive to the children's needs. This emotional support enables children to settle quickly into pre-school life and to feel secure in the learning environment.
- Staff promote the development of the children's language skills effectively through everyday conversation. Children talk confidently about past, present and future events. They are introduced to new vocabulary, including descriptive words, and can recall and use them appropriately in their everyday conversations.

- Staff take time to foster children's enjoyment of books. Stories are read by staff with animation, which encourages children to join in with remembered phrases, finish rhyming strings and predict the outcome. Children talk about the emotions raised through the stories they share and can demonstrate care and compassion for characters in the stories.
- Staff provide daily opportunities for children to enjoy larger physical equipment. Children use the climbing frame, balance beams, balls and hoops with great skill and agility.

What needs to be improved?

- system for recording children's progress
- daily provision of activities
- curriculum planning

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were three key issues identified at the previous education inspection. Overall there has been generally good progress in addressing the issues and improvement in the educational programme.

Generally good progress has been made in extending staff's curriculum knowledge of the stepping stones and early learning goals. Many staff have attended professional training courses which have included the Foundation Stage. They have also attended some short courses relevant to planning and assessment and using the areas of learning. Generally their understanding is sound but currently still lack the confidence to always use practical, everyday opportunities to promote the children's learning. Also, they have not used their knowledge to identify weaknesses in the children's assessments records.

There are some significant weaknesses in meeting the second key issue to make better use of assessments to identify what each child should be learning next. Staff make regular observations of the children including their attitudes to learning. These observations, although brief, are useful. However this information is then transferred to assessment records that consist of the early learning goals only and do not include the stepping stones, which are the pathways to the goals. These records are very advanced for this age range and are therefore, not very effective in informing the future planning for individual children's next steps.

There has been generally good progress in meeting the third issue. Now there are information posters about the foundation stage displayed in the reception area to make parents aware. Newsletters include the next planned topics and the short term plans are displayed on the notice board. There are no formal parents meetings to share assessment records but parents are made aware that these are available at any time. Parents feel informed about the setting and are happy with the level of communication about their children.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are happy and settled. Generally they are eager to join in with games and activities. Older children have good concentration skills and all children take pride in finishing a task for example a mother's day card. They learn to share and take turns. They develop some independence skills when they wash their hands or pour their own drinks. Children learn about the wider world through planned topics. They are polite and helpful and overall their behaviour is good.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are enthusiastic speakers and express their ideas as they play. They listen to stories and are able to reflect on and recall favourites. They listen to instructions and carry them out. They learn letter sounds through letter of the week and to recognise their own names when they arrive. Children are encouraged to write and form letters correctly. They learn that words have meaning when looking at books. They have few regular opportunities to write for a purpose for example in role-play.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children count how many steps around the balance beam. They learn to recognise and name numerals when using number puzzles and card games. They match and name 2D shapes when looking at books or playing a group shape game. They explore 3D shape when they use construction toys. Children begin to understand calculation when they sing number rhymes. They learn positional language. They have some opportunities to learn about measurement and to make comparisons.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children comment on change and develop a sense of time when they talk about the weather and then go out to play in the snow. They have some opportunities to explore and investigate materials for example when using the shallow sand tray, collage materials or clay. They design and build with construction toys. There is a limited range of tools, equipment, and exploratory and investigative resources available to the children on a regular basis. Children have limited access to ICT equipment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children learn about healthy eating and exercise through everyday and planned experiences. They develop a sense of space when they choose somewhere to sit or run around outside. They use a range of equipment to develop their larger physical skills for example balance beams and climbing frame. They demonstrate good hand eye coordination when using pencils and small construction toys. They use some items, for example, scissors to learn about using tools safely.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children join in with singing and remember a range of songs and rhymes. They sometimes use instruments, listen and move to music. They use their senses through planned activities such as food tasting or cooking. They have opportunities to draw, paint, make models and collages, both independently and through adult directed activities. Children have few regular opportunities to develop their imaginative skills through regular use of role-play equipment or small world resources.

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

- Review the recording system for children's progress to ensure that records are more clearly linked to the stepping stones of learning. Clear links will enable all staff to see quickly what the child already knows and inform planning for the children's next steps in their learning.
- Improve the range of daily activities and experiences to ensure that there is a wider range available to the children to interest, motivate and challenge them and to cover the learning areas, particularly with regard to explorative and investigative play and imaginative play.
- Improve planning to show, more frequently, how less able children will be supported and how more able children will be challenged.

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.