



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 323089

DfES Number: 534041

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 06/10/2004
Inspector Name Sharon Verma

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name St Helens College Nursery and Creche
Setting Address Brook Street
St. Helens
Merseyside
WA10 1PZ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Pat Balon, Ms Jill Cook, Ms Carol Thompson

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Mrs Pat Balon, Ms Jill Cook, Ms Carol Thompson
Address Brook Street
St. Helens
Merseyside
WA10 1PZ

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

St. Helens College Nursery and Crèche opened in 1986. It operates from six rooms in a secure, self contained unit within the Brook Street Campus, in the centre of St. Helens. It serves the local area. Children attend the crèche on a sessional basis in accordance with parents' attendance on part-time college courses. The nursery is available to staff within the college and the general public.

There are currently 177 children from birth to five years on roll. This includes 13 funded three and four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. There are no children attending with special needs.

The crèche opens five day a week during college term times. Sessions are from 9.00 until 17.00. The nursery is open five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 8.00 until 18.00.

Seventeen full time and 11 part time staff work with the children. All the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3 and six also have a relevant HNC qualification. Two staff are currently enrolled on the Foundation Degree in Early Years Course and there are also two NVQ students on placement.

How good is the Day Care?

St Helens College Nursery and Crèche provides satisfactory care overall for children. The setting is generally well organised and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The staff group is experienced, consistent and well qualified and there are opportunities for them to access training. There is a weakness however in the deployment of staff within the setting which does at times impact on the care of the children. The premises are attractively decorated and are welcoming to children and parents. There is a comprehensive set of policies and procedures and records are up to date and stored securely.

The premises are well maintained, clean and safe. Detailed risk assessments are

carried out and any new hazards are recorded and actioned. Children's health is promoted well through good hygiene practices, and the provision of varied and healthy meals and snacks in the nursery. Some of the furniture is however worn, and is presenting a health risk to children.

Staff plan a variety of activities and experiences for children which promote their overall development. They also organise special theme days e.g. dental health and food tasting and fundraising days to introduce and broaden the children's knowledge and understanding of different issues. The continuous provision offered in nursery and crèche provide children with choices and allow them to make decisions about their play. The setting is well resourced and most rooms have a good selection of equipment that reflects diversity. Opportunities for children to be active outdoors are sometimes limited and the arrangements for children to rest and relax in a quiet area in the crèche are at times overlooked.

The partnership with parents and carers is fostered well, with information exchanged effectively through newsletters, informal chats, parents' evenings and detailed brochures. Parents expressed satisfaction with the service offered, commented on the friendly staff and good range of activities.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The provider has successfully addressed all of the actions from the last inspection. Staff records including evidence of satisfactory clearances are now kept to demonstrate the suitability of those caring for children. All issues around record keeping have been addressed to ensure the setting is now operating within the National Standards and keeping parents informed about important matters such as food intakes for babies and medication administered to children. The setting now keeps records to demonstrate that the premises are satisfactorily maintained in respect of gas, electrical and fire safety and therefore safe for children. A procedure has been devised in the case of a child being lost ensuring staff have a clear plan of action should this happen. As agreed at the last inspection, confirmation has been provided to Ofsted regarding committee members so that the appropriate checks may be carried out.

What is being done well?

- Good staff ratios in the nursery rooms mean that staff can offer children lots of attention and support and meet their individual needs.
- Babies have a good selection of resources which promote their overall development including natural materials in the two treasure basket staff have made up. Staff in nursery room two are promoting all areas of learning through their topic on 'people who help us'. Children in the pre-school room are becoming confident learners. They are developing a good understanding of the wider world including other cultures through their pen pal in Ethiopia and related activities such as stories, food tasting and the celebration of different festivals. Staff in crèche room three are extending children's learning through their current topic 'Looking After Ourselves' and the crèche rooms

which cater for the younger children are concentrating on settling the children in while providing a flexible programme of activities for them to enjoy.

- The nursery and crèche have a good selection of both indoor and outdoor play equipment which supports children's learning and development. Equipment is also exchanged between rooms providing a wider variety and extra stimulation for the children.
- Children's health and safety is promoted well within the setting. There are two evacuation trolleys to transport babies off the premises in an emergency and finger protectors have been fitted on all doors. There are good safety arrangements in place for using the outdoor play area, which include regular stops and head counts. When the crèche recently introduced a packed lunch system for crèche children, they consulted with the hospitality section within the college, and devised an information leaflet for parents advising them about food safety.
- Staff manage children's behaviour well, and children respond well to the praise and encouragement and rewards such as stickers and certificates which staff give out.

What needs to be improved?

- the deployment of staff
- the opportunities for children to be active outdoors
- the arrangements for children to rest and relax in the crèche
- the children's health and safety in relation to worn adult seating

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
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7	Remove hazard associated with the worn adult chairs.
2	Review the deployment of staff to ensure that staffing ratios are being met in each room.
3	Provide opportunities for children to be active outdoors and review the arrangements in the crèche for children to rest and relax in a quiet area.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St Helen's College Nursery offers provision which is acceptable and of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are happy, confident and enthusiastic to learn through the rich selection of activities and resources provided.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, stepping stones and early learning goals. They provide a wide range of exciting, stimulating and practical activities to children. Staff use every opportunity to help children learn. They effectively question children in both planned and spontaneous activities to enable them to think and make decisions. Staff have a good relationship with the children. Challenges for children are good though more able children are not sufficiently challenged outdoors. Staff use assessment systems and ongoing observations effectively to enable them to chart children's progress and plan the next steps in their development. Plans cover all areas of learning and are implemented well by all staff. Resources are organised to encourage children's choice and independence. Staff work very well together as a team and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff communicate well with each other and the children further enhancing the children's learning.

The leadership and management are very good. Strong leadership enhances the staff's ability to provide good quality learning opportunities to children. Staff have very good opportunities to plan activities together as a team. The leadership is committed to the ongoing development of the setting and uses action plans well to enhance the provision.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents are provided with good quality written information about the nursery and its provision. There are effective systems in place to share information about children's progress. The partnership with parents is highly valued by the setting.

What is being done well?

- Staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage, they are skilled educators who use every opportunity to help children learn and make progress. They plan a range of stimulating activities which enable children to make links in their learning. Staff are supported well by the committed management team who provide regular planning time and the opportunities for staff to further develop their skills through training courses. Staff are open to new suggestions and ways of working that will further enhance the children's learning opportunities.
- Children are interested, eager to learn and show good levels of personal independence. They are developing a very good understanding of their own cultures and beliefs and those of others through well planned activities and

resources.

- Children enjoy mathematical activities and are developing a positive attitude to all aspects of mathematics. Children's grasp of numbers is very good supported by the number rich environment.
- Children's skills in communication, language and literacy are developing well. They enjoy a range of mark making activities and write for a purpose around the setting and outdoors. They are becoming confident speakers and are eager to share news at circle time.

What needs to be improved?

- the challenges for more able children outdoors
- the consistency in using upper and lower case letters.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made in addressing the two key issues from the last inspection.

The first key issue was to develop an assessment system which is manageable and enables staff to assess children's progress regularly and effectively across the six areas. The assessment system clearly links to the stepping stones and early learning goals. Staff undertake regular observations of the children and then use this information to effectively chart their progress through the stepping stones. Staff confidently identify the next steps in children's learning from the observations, assessments and weekly evaluations of the activities.

The second key issue was to provide a collection of objects which will encourage the children to question how things work and why things happen. Staff have incorporated interest tables within the room which are changed regularly and incorporate a range of objects for children to explore, to look at how they work and notice change. Staff are skilled at questioning children prompting them to think why something has happened for example asking why the paint has change colour. Staff have a range of investigative resources which are available to the children at all times.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are enthusiastic in their approach to play, new experiences and activities. They are well behaved and show good levels of personal independence seeing to their own needs and self selecting activities. Children talk freely about their home life and future events such as the birth of a baby. They are developing respect for their own cultures and beliefs. Children interact well with their peers and staff. They are proud of their achievements such as completing a computer task.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children speak clearly and are developing an awareness of the listener. They use language well to communicate ideas and thoughts during activities such as food tasting. They enjoy hearing and using new words such as poppadoms. Children are beginning to make links between sounds and letters and recognise their own name. Children enjoy a print rich environment though the use of upper and lower case letter is not consistent. They enjoy listening to stories both read and listening to a cassette.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children confidently count every day objects and recognise the meaning of numbers such as four in the sand. They identify numbers to five. They use mathematical language well in activities i.e. "I'm bigger than you." They enjoy looking at patterns and recreate these well using peg boards. They learn about addition and subtraction through number rhymes. Children enjoy using the computer to complete maths activities. They are developing an understanding of mathematical concepts.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn about different cultures and beliefs through well planned activities incorporating real people like Tadesse. Children are eager to find out about his life and make links to their own lives. Children are confident using the computer, mouse and keyboard. They have good opportunities to investigate real and made objects. They construct well with a range of resources. They are eager to talk about past and future events in their lives.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident to climb under over and through tunnels on the climbing frame and have access to a range of wheeled toys. However more able children are not sufficiently challenged outdoors. Children move safely in and around the setting negotiating obstacles well. They handle tools safely and with increasing control such as scissors and cutlery. They recognise the importance of staying healthy, washing hands to remove germs, changes in their heart beat after exercise.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are eager to participate in creative activities such as painting. They use their imagination well in well resourced role play scenarios and include others in their play. They explore a range of media and techniques to draw, paint and construct. They enjoy using musical instruments recreating their own sounds. Children communicate their ideas well in activities such as describing the food's taste and texture. Children enjoy using malleable materials and gloop.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following areas:
- provide sufficient challenge to more able children outdoors.

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.