



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 220270

DfES Number: 516677

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 09/02/2005
Inspector Name Anne Archer

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care, Sessional Day Care, Out of School Day Care
Setting Name Little Stones Pre-School and Out of School Clubs
Setting Address The Horsa Hut
Jackson Lane
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
NN8 4LS

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Little Stones Pre- School 1027256

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Little Stones Pre- School
Address The Horsa Hut
Jackson Lane
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
NN8 4LB

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

Little Stones Pre-school and Out of School Club is a well-established voluntary group, which operates from its own premises, The Horsa Hut, near the centre of Wellingborough. The pre-school is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children aged from two years to under five years at any one session. There are currently 48 children on roll. Of these nine children receive funding for nursery education. Sessions are offered from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:30 to 15:00 Monday to Friday in term time only.

The Out of School Club registered in 2002. It is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children from the age of three years to under eight years. There are currently 18 children on roll. Children over the age of eight may attend and are included in the overall numbers. Sessions are from 1500 to 1800 hours, and children are collected from two local primary schools, St Barnabas and Freeman's Endowed.

Little Stones Holiday Club also operates from the same premises during school holidays from 0830 to 1730 hours and is registered for 24 children aged five to eleven years.

There are five members of staff who work with all the children. Three members of staff including the supervisor hold an NVQ level 3 in childcare. The group caters for children who speak English as an additional language and supports children with special needs. The preschool is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and is in receipt of qualified teacher support from Northamptonshire Early Years Development Childcare Partnership.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Little Stones Pre-school provides good quality nursery education overall which enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very well catered for.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff know the children well, have good relationships with them and have a consistent approach to managing their behaviour. While staff take turns to plan a variety of practical activities for the children, the learning objectives are not always clear nor are they linked to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Aspects of mathematical development, communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world are not fully covered in planning. Staff observe children's learning and assess their progress however records are not linked to the stepping stones. Weekly evaluations of activities by staff, although used to inform future planning, are not recorded. Children with special educational needs are well supported.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is generally good. The responsible person is aware of her role and is very supportive of the supervisor. Together they ensure staff work as a team to fulfil the aims of the pre-school. Since the last inspection there have been several changes within the provision and both the responsible person and the supervisor are aware that key issues from the previous inspection report have not been sufficiently addressed. Although in place, staff appraisals are not yet fully developed.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are provided with information about the provision of nursery education, policies, routines and activities within the preschool. They are welcome to talk informally to staff about their child, are encouraged to share what they know and be involved in their child's learning.

What is being done well?

- Children with special educational needs are well supported. The designated member of staff finds out all she can about each individual child's specific needs and works in partnership with parents and other agencies to meet those needs.
- Staff use effective strategies to promote good behaviour and consideration for others. They give clear and consistent boundaries and help children understand the impact of unacceptable behaviour on others.
- The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are provided with clear information about the provision of nursery education, are encouraged to share what they know about their child and be involved in their child's learning.

What needs to be improved?

- planning documents and children's records of progress to link learning outcomes to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning
- the recording of evaluations
- the staff appraisal system
- the attention given to increasing children's awareness of their own beliefs and cultures and those of others, helping children link sounds to letters and to reinforcing children's learning of calculation and problem solving.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good progress has been made since the last inspection to address the key issues made at the last inspection.

Staff encourage more parents to be involved in their children's learning. A parent rota has been re-established and some parents enjoy coming to sessions to support their own and other children by reading stories and helping with practical activities. Regular newsletters provide parents with information about future topics of learning and include ideas to extend children's learning at home.

The remaining key issue from the previous inspection report has been less well developed. Although more detail of intended learning is now included in the planning documents this information is not always linked to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Records of children's progress are maintained throughout the year but again this information is not clearly linked to the stepping stones. This remains a key issue.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are becoming confident learners and show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities. Children are developing an awareness of their own needs and feelings. They are beginning to understand right from wrong and they have an awareness of the boundaries within the preschool. All children make relationships with adults and most children with their peers. They are learning to work as part of a group, take turns and share.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children listen to stories on a 1:1 basis and in small groups but are easily distracted when in a large group. They enjoy action songs and rhymes. Most children communicate well during their play and some speak confidently in a large group. Children have free access to writing materials and some ascribe meaning to their mark making. There are limited activities for children to learn how to link sounds to letters. Children participate in activities to develop their hand/eye coordination.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children benefit from good individual support in addition to group activities to help them count to ten and to recognise the corresponding numeral. There are limited activities to enable children to learn about calculation and simple problem solving. Children are developing their awareness of shape, space and measure, as well as the relevant language, through a range of practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children learn about living things and growing through a variety of activities, which develop their exploration and investigative skills. They are able to join construction pieces together realising that tools can be used for a purpose. Children are learning to use individual computers and other simple equipment. Activities to increase children's awareness of their own and others beliefs and cultures are limited. Through a range of activities children are developing a sense of time and place.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

By participating in a range of activities children are learning to move with control and confidence. Children are developing an awareness of space when playing amongst other children. They are learning about good practices relating to their health and have an awareness of how their bodies are affected by exercise. Children use one-handed equipment and tools and are learning that they have to be used safely.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Most children are able to differentiate colours, explain what happens when they mix colours and choose particular colours for a purpose. Children are beginning to describe the texture of things and participate in activities to develop their senses. Children join in with simple familiar songs and enjoy experimenting with sounds when using musical instruments. Some children engage in imaginative play based on first hand experiences, sometimes introducing a narrative or storyline.

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 that planning documents and children's records of progress are linked to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals
- provide regular activities and teaching to help children link sounds to letters, reinforce their learning of calculation and problem solving and develop their awareness of their own and other people's beliefs and cultures
- develop staff appraisal to ensure that the training and development of staff has a positive impact on children's wellbeing and learning.

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.