



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 110140

DfES Number: 584801

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 10/02/2005
Inspector Name Anne Munro

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name The Valley Pre-School
Setting Address C/o Meonstoke C of E School, Chapel Road
Meonstoke
Southampton
Hampshire
SO32 3NJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of The Valley Pre-School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name The Valley Pre-School
Address Chapel Road
Meonstoke
Southampton
Hampshire
SO32 3NJ

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

The Valley Preschool opened in 1975 and has operated in its present location since April 2000. It is situated in a self contained annexe at Meonstoke Church of England School with playroom, kitchen and toilets, and shares outside play areas with the school. The preschool is a community group, managed by a voluntary committee and serves the village and the local area.

The preschool is registered to accept up to 24 children from 2 to 5 years old.

There are currently 34 children on roll, including 28 in receipt of nursery funding. The preschool supports a small number of children with special needs.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 to 12:00. Some children stay to 13:00 to eat a packed lunch together. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are 10 members of staff working with the children, including 6 with relevant early years qualifications and 1 working towards a recognised qualification. The setting has close links with Meonstoke School and receives support from the reception class teacher and from the Hampshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The preschool is an accredited member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision of nursery education at The Valley Pre-school is acceptable and of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Experienced staff have secure understanding of the early learning goals and are supporting less experienced staff in developing their knowledge. All contribute to planning an exciting range of activities that promote children's learning in all areas. Staff maintain comprehensive records of children's progress and have very good understanding of children's needs, which they use in planning activities to ensure individual progression. They use appropriate teaching methods, asking questions to develop learning, and are particularly good at enabling children to make choices and develop independence. They make good use of available space, especially in using the outside areas. They use praise to re-inforce good behaviour and liaise with other professionals to address any special needs.

Leadership and management of the setting are very good. An active management committee provides good support to the staff, operating a system of staff appraisal and supporting staff in updating their skills with ongoing training. The joint supervisors work well together and have systems in place to ensure that staff and volunteers are effectively deployed and confident about their responsibilities. They constantly evaluate provision and implement changes as needed. Staff and committee together discuss ideas for development of the pre-school and are currently fundraising for a new building and planning to introduce afternoon sessions.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents receive good information about activities and are encouraged to be involved. They serve on the committee and offer practical help in sessions, as well as supporting fundraising and social events. They are able to discuss their children's progress with staff and contribute to assessment and records.

What is being done well?

- Staff make good use of outside areas and the local environment. Children spend part of each day outside, whatever the weather, either enjoying physical activities in the school playgrounds or exploring the local area. They regularly visit the play park to use the climbing and balancing equipment, and walk to the nearby stream. They collect natural objects to study, such as leaves and worms, and discover seasonal changes at a local farm.
- Parents and members of the local community are very involved in the life of the pre-school. Visitors such as the 'lollipop lady', an airline pilot, a vet, a chef, the Vicar, the Mayor of Winchester and the local MP are invited to share their expertise and help develop children's understanding of the world around

them, and parents use their professional skills in practical ways to develop the provision.

- The development of children's literacy skills is very good. Children quickly learn to recognise their written names and staff introduce them to other written words and to the links between sounds and letters. Children use a variety of activities to develop good pencil control and learn to form recognisable letters. All children attempt to write their names on their work, some clearly legible, others needing more help. Children use emergent writing skills in their role play, for example writing messages on a pad beside the phone in the home corner and taking orders in the Chinese restaurant.
- Children are very good at counting as staff include numbers throughout activities. Children count how many are present at registration and calculate that five staff and one visitor makes six adults. They learn to recognise numerals using a variety of games and puzzles.

What needs to be improved?

- the organisation of sessions to minimise distraction and encourage concentration.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Improvement since the last inspection is very good. The group was asked to provide "opportunities for more frequent use of books by the children". Staff include storytime at least once each day when they read books to the whole group or to two smaller groups, depending on the needs of children present. Children are also able to use a tape player and headphones to listen to story tapes while looking at the book. A comfortable book corner with a good range of well-displayed books is provided. Children choose to sit and look at books during sessions, and all children use the book corner while they wait for others to finish at snack time. Parents are encouraged to join a rota for sharing books with children in the book corner.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children come confidently into preschool and settle quickly into familiar routines. They generally sit quietly to listen and can concentrate for long periods at their chosen activities. Staff use praise and encouragement to promote children's self-esteem and good behaviour, so children play well together and relate confidently to adults. They are developing good levels of independence in their personal care and in choosing activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. They learn to recognise their written names, and are introduced to the links between sounds and letters. All children attempt to write their names, many of them with recognisable letters, and they use emergent writing skills in imaginative play. Staff encourage conversation throughout activities, building up vocabulary, so that children become confident speakers, although they are not always attentive to what others have to say.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Most children are confident in counting to ten and many beyond, as staff make counting an integral part of activities. Children enjoy number rhymes and use simple calculation to solve practical problems. Both three and four year olds can recognise numerals. They learn about shape and size, and sort, match and recreate patterns with a variety of resources. Staff encourage them to practise mathematical language as they play with sand, water, playdough and construction toys.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn about the natural environment on local walks, noting seasonal changes and collecting materials to study. They see changes that occur as they mix ingredients for cooking, or plant and watch things grow. They learn about their community from visitors to the group and on outings, and learn about their own and other cultures. They design and build imaginatively with construction toys and recycled materials, and use a computer and simple technology to support their learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children develop good spatial awareness steering ride-on toys around the playground and joining in movement sessions indoors and out. They make regular visits to use large play equipment in the adjoining park for developing physical control and co-ordination, as well as negotiating obstacle courses in the play room. They practise skills with a good range of small equipment such as balls and beanbags, and use a wide range of activities to increase their manipulative skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children use a good range of techniques and media to explore colour, shape and texture, and have plenty of opportunities to use their own ideas in artwork. They learn about sound and rhythm using percussion instruments, move to music and join in songs and rhymes with enthusiasm. They use imagination in playing with small world toys and puppets. Staff organise stimulating role play situations that enable children to develop imagination and learn from their experiences.

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:
- the organisation of some whole group activities to minimise distraction and enable all children to concentrate and contribute.

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.