



**Office for Standards
in Education**

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 507849

DfES Number: 518903

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 08/03/2004
Inspector Name Louise, Caroline Bonney

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Heather Rabbit Nursery
Setting Address Heather Row Cottage
 Heather Row, Nately Scures
 Hook
 Hampshire
 RG27 9JP

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Ms ROSEMARY WARD

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

Heather Rabbit Nursery opened in 1985. It operates mainly from a private house, and accommodation used includes the main playroom and secure garden, with occasional use of two sitting rooms, kitchen and conservatory. It is in a quiet rural location, and the nursery serves the surrounding villages and towns.

There are currently 26 children from 3 years to under 5 years on roll. This includes 15 funded three years olds and 8 funded four years olds. Children attend for a variety of half and whole day sessions. The group can support children who have special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week during school term times. For those receiving the education grant sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00, 12:15 until 15:00 hours, or 09:00 until 15:00 if all day. For children not in receipt of the grant, sessions run from 09:30 until 12:00, 12:30 until 15:00, or 09:30 until 15:00 if all day. When staying for a full day children bring their own packed lunches.

There are nine part time staff working with the children, and a peripatetic Kodaly music teacher attends once a week. Seven staff have early years qualifications at NVQ or equivalent at levels two and three. One member of staff is waiting to start NVQ 2 training programme. The setting receives support from a teacher mentor from the Early Education and Childcare Partnership, and attends cluster group meetings with other local preschools and schools. Support and advice is also received from the Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

The nursery follows the Margaret McMillan education system, which focuses on the use of outside to promote learning. Children have close contact with a variety of animals, and access the adjacent SSSI woodland and common.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff plan and evaluate the curriculum thoroughly to ensure children have good opportunities to develop in all areas of learning. They provide stimulating practical activities, and use the excellent resources to provide learning opportunities in different and interesting ways. They skilfully question and interact with the children to develop their play and thinking, and extend their activities well in all areas, with minor weaknesses in technology, literacy and creativity.

Staff observe the children's progress, and keep assessment records which link to the Foundation Stage stepping stones. These records help inform planning to ensure the continual progression of children's learning.

Leadership and management is very good. The owner and staff work closely together and support the clear action plan for the on-going development of the provision. There are annual appraisals and maintenance of professional development through staff attending additional training. Close mentoring of new staff ensures the continual high standard of teaching.

The partnership with parents is generally good. They receive basic information about the provision in an introductory pack, backed up by a comprehensive parents' folder kept on the premises. Questionnaires sent out to parents and children help the continual evaluation of the provision carried out by the owner and staff. There is limited information given to help parents extend their children's learning at home, although good photographic displays and a daily list inform them of past activities.

What is being done well?

- Staff encourage children to think through what they need, frequently asking them 'what will happen if ...', 'what do you need to ..' and 'why did ...' questions. They also skilfully extend the children's activities so that they learn at a rate appropriate to their individual needs.
- Excellent use is made of the garden and surrounding area, where staff provide cross-curricula activities in all weathers. Children develop very good self-confidence and enjoy the freedom of the environment.
- Children have very good opportunities to explore and investigate. They enjoy visiting the woods, common and the pond to observe the wildlife and changing seasons. In the nursery, they show amazement as they hold blue and yellow ice cubes and watch their hands turn green. They handle a variety of animals, such as tortoises, slow worms, the pony and the lamb, and learn

to show care and concern towards them.

- There are excellent resources, particularly outside, where there are a variety of playhouses and good opportunities for the children to run, swing, climb and ride on a wide range of equipment.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to write for a purpose and to use books to support their activities
- opportunities to use the communication and information technology equipment
- opportunities for children to develop their own ideas in craft and modelling to develop their confidence in their own creativity
- provision of information about children's progress and activities, so that parents can share in promoting their learning and understanding at home.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The nursery has made generally good progress towards addressing the two key issues raised at the last inspection. They were asked to re-organise the grouping of the children and associated staff deployment during some activities, for example registration, to ensure consistent active participation of all children. The size of the group has been reduced to 20 children, which has been found to be helpful. Children concentrate well for most large group activities, such as story time, although some children are still distracted during registration time.

The nursery was asked to identify training opportunities to develop the skills and experience of all staff. A training schedule is in place showing the courses staff have attended, and those they plan to attend. One new member of staff is to attend NVQ 2 training, and all other staff attend workshops to develop their skills and experience.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident and communicate clearly, and develop very good relationships with each other and the staff. They are very keen to participate in activities, and exercise independent learning well. Children are independent in self-care, and ask for their needs confidently, including equipment requests. They behave well, and show care and concern towards each other and the animals. Staff encourage parents to share their skills, and to bring in animals for the children to handle.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children express themselves clearly through gestures and language. They plan their activities together and recall experiences. Staff provide excellent opportunities for children to extend their thinking through skilful questioning. Children recognise their names and some letters and sounds of word beginnings. They make simple rhymes, and enjoy listening to stories. There are too few opportunities for children to write for a purpose, or to use books to support their activities.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Staff provide very good opportunities for children to use number and comparison in a range of practical activities. They count how many seconds it takes to give the lamb her bottle. They match bricks to numbers, and combine them, and immediately recognise how many are in a group. Children count well to 10, many up to 20, and can predict the next number. They show good understanding of shape, size and position throughout the activities, and children use mathematical language during their play.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have excellent opportunities to explore and investigate through activities provided, particularly through use of the garden and surrounding areas. They handle a variety of animals including, taking rides on the pony and watching the lamb bottle-feed. They develop a sense of time watching their animals and garden grow. Various visitors, such as the beekeeper and chimney sweep, promote children's interest in our world. There is little access to communication and information technology.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Staff support children well as they balance, swing, climb, pedal and balance, and they enjoy moving to action rhymes. Children have a good sense of space and move confidently as they follow paths on wheeled toys. They show good control using a wide good range of equipment, such as gardening tools, and carry buckets and bowls of water carefully without spilling. They peg cards up, pour their own drinks, transfer lentils with small spoons, and hold pencils in a pincher grip.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children explore colour and texture through a wide range of art and craft activities. They use a variety of construction materials, and have good opportunities to explore sound and rhythm. Staff help children develop their role play, and they freely select props from other areas. Staff encourage them to use all their senses during activities, they smell herbs and listen to bubbles pop. There are not many opportunities for children to develop their own ideas in craft and modelling.

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

- encourage children to write for a purpose and to use books to support their activities
- provide opportunities for use of communication and information technology equipment
- encourage children to develop their own ideas in craft and modelling to develop their confidence in their own creativity
- share with parents children's assessment records and planned learning opportunities to help involve them in their children's 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.