



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127498

DfES Number: 518330

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 11/02/2004
Inspector Name Christine Robinson

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Rising Fives Nursery
Setting Address Hillside, Plain Road
Smeeth
Ashford
Kent
TN25 6QX

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Mary Calver

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

Rising Fives Nursery opened in 1989. It operates from part of the ground floor of the owner's private house in the village of Smeeth near Ashford. There are kitchen and cloakroom facilities and children play in the hall and two play rooms. Children play outside everyday in an enclosed garden that also has a sheltered patio area. The nursery is in a rural setting and there is a strong emphasis on children having access to the natural world.

There are currently 58 children from two to five years on roll. This includes eight funded three year olds and seven funded four year olds. Children mostly attend all day; on Tuesdays, there are sessions morning and afternoon for younger and older children respectively. The nursery is open from 09:00-15:00 during term time. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and all children speak English.

Apart from the manager, there are four members of staff, two of whom hold early years qualifications. The setting receives support from an early years advisory teacher and is taking part in a quality assurance scheme.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Rising Fives Nursery gives children a chance to enjoy learning through a range of balanced and interesting activities. Children are making very good progress towards the six early learning goals.

The quality of teaching overall is generally good. Staff work together well in a small and enthusiastic team and use effective teaching methods appropriate to children's age and abilities. Sessions are well organised and as a result of staff encouragement, children behave well and develop high levels of self-esteem. Good use is made of the limited space but the position of the book corner means that children are not attracted to spend time learning about books on their own.

All staff plan the curriculum and it is based on integrating topics through all the nursery's activities, changing every two to three weeks. Plans are based on the stepping stones and concentrate on two of the early learning goals each term. Staff observe children regularly and know them very well; this enables them to pitch future activities at the right level. Stepping stones books are kept but these records of assessment are not always fully updated.

Leadership and management is very good. The manager provides staff with a role model of good teaching practice and encourages her staff to extend their learning through training. There are regular staff appraisals, staff meetings and liaison with local schools. The nursery is taking part in a quality assurance scheme and is committed to the improvement of its service.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are kept informed through verbal interaction, accessible folders of children's work, regular newsletters and through the transfer document scheme when their children leave. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning by, for example, providing items for the sounds table. Although parents can have access to policies, procedures and assessment records, the information is not kept updated.

What is being done well?

- Many examples of children's work are displayed and this helps boost children's self-esteem. Children thrive by being given special responsibilities and duties. Staff successfully use praise and encouragement to promote children's confidence; one child on being rewarded by staff said 'I've been so good.'
- Staff work well as a team to provide an interesting range of activities based on themes. The theme is integrated effectively throughout the curriculum to reinforce children's learning. For example, children learn about the Chinese New Year by tasting Chinese food at snack time, making lanterns, dressing as a dragon and acting out a story with musical instruments.

- Children can practise and develop physical skills outside and there is a strong emphasis on learning about the natural world. The nursery owner has a dog and cat, children plant tomatoes and flowers in their own garden and are able to learn about small domestic animals like chicks and lambs.

What needs to be improved?

- the updating of written information for parents on the setting and the Foundation Stage
- the monitoring of assessment records
- the position of the book corner.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, there was one key issue. The issue concerned increasing the opportunity for children to select resources and thereby develop independent learning. Progress on this issue has been generally good.

The nursery has purchased a low storage unit with labelled trays from which children can make choices at certain times of the session. The limited nature of the space in the nursery prevents children being able to have a totally free choice of items. Children are also encouraged to be independent in other areas of the nursery; children are confident and are able to ask staff for favourite toys or resources that are not displayed.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy good relationships with staff and each other. They are able to act independently and are developing confidence and self-esteem. During free-play sessions, they are able to select resources and show interest and concentration in using them. Children work well alone and are also able to co-operate with other children in small and large groups.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children listen attentively to books and stories and take part eagerly in role-play and in learning poems and songs. Children learn about the sounds and shapes of letters; they can recognise their own names and the most able are starting to read simple words. Children show good pencil control and are able to form letters correctly. They speak with confidence and are able to use language to express their feelings and talk about a variety of concepts.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn about number, shape and pattern through a range of practical activities and incidental opportunities and through more formal teaching in work books. They learn about addition and subtraction by simple problem solving such as counting how many children are missing from the expected total at registration time. Children can count and understand numbers up to 10 and many can count further.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

There are many opportunities for children to find about the natural world through regular access to outside play and links with community life. They design and build three-dimensional models through the use of scrap materials and a good variety of construction toys. Children learn about the wider world through the celebration of festivals, occasional visitors and extended topic work. Children's learning about information technology is supported by free access to a computer.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are able to take part in vigorous physical activity, like climbing and running, throughout the year. They also learn to control their bodies through the use of equipment such as a balancing beam. Children are offered many opportunities to practise fine movements through the use of pencils, brushes, scissors and chopsticks.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have very good opportunities to explore colour, shape and form as they play with dough, paint and cornflour. Children learn a wide range of songs and poems and sometimes learn about rhythm and pitch through the use of musical instruments. Children are able to express their feelings and use their imagination through opportunities for role-play and dressing-up.

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 the following:
- ensure that children build on their interest in books by reviewing the position of the book corner
- ensure that assessment records are kept up-to-date to ensure staff can use them to plan fully for children's learning needs.

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.