



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127783

DfES Number: 514298

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 02/02/2004
Inspector Name Susan Jennifer Scott

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Woodlands under 5's Playgroup
Setting Address Vinters Park Community Centre
Aldon Close
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 5QS

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Woodlands Under 5's Playgroup

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Woodlands Under 5's Playgroup
Address Vinters Park Community Centre
Aldon Close
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 5QS

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

Woodlands under 5's Pre-School opened in 1982. It operates from two main rooms, in the Vinters Community Centre, in Vinters Parks Maidstone. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 51 children aged from two to five years on roll. This includes 12 funded three year olds and 15 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Currently no children attending have special needs and five have English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:15 until 11:45 Monday to Friday and 12:45 to 3:15 Monday and Tuesday.

A total of two full time and five part time relief staff work with the children. Four have early years qualifications and one staff member is currently awaiting a training course. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Woodlands under 5's Pre-school is good. It enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good and there is very good planning to cover the curriculum. Staff plan a good variety of practical activities and understand what children learn from them. Resources are of good quality and well organised to increase children's independence. Staff are skilled at developing children's play and understanding of ideas. They communicate effectively with them, asking questions and offering prompts to encourage them to find things out and talk about what they are doing. Group activities for the funded children are presented in an enthusiastic and interesting manner, but the main hall where most take place is very large and noisy so that children are sometimes distracted and find it difficult to focus.

Staff observe and note their assessments of children's learning during structured activities and daily routines which cover each of the six areas. However, their assessments are not always linked to planning for the next steps in children's learning. A new system of assessment is planned for use and this should provide information to identify what children need to do next to progress.

The leadership and management of the day nursery is generally good. The supervisor has been particularly effective in guiding the committed staff team who have a collaborative approach to all aspects of their work. The management committee support staff and provide opportunities to develop the resources to benefit children.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents can talk informally to staff about their children and are invited to a consultation at the centre. There is access to children's development records during sessions, and information on the programme helps parents to support their children's learning at home.

What is being done well?

- Registration activities offer children good opportunities to discuss events and the environment, to count and recognise numbers; these help children develop children's confidence and support other many other aspects of their learning
- Children are motivated to learn through activities which are practical and build on their interests. Staff value what children say and do, encouraging children to behave well and to learn effectively
- There is a strong staff team who have worked successfully to address the key issues noted at the previous inspection, especially the planning, so that

documentation supports the organisation of activities and routines

What needs to be improved?

- children's access to books so that there is an area where they can sit comfortably and quietly and enjoy the books available
- the organisation of the rooms and activities so that the amount of distraction and noise children experience is limited
- the planning for individual children's learning, so that assessments are used to identify the appropriate stepping stones and early learning goals to enable progress

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the playgroup have made very good progress:

the planning has improved and systems implemented to ensure the six curriculum areas are covered methodically.

Use of assessment and recording of children's progress has developed to ensure that plans are assessed and activities evaluated, and parents are informed of progress. However, the planning for individual children needs to be linked with the assessments and observations made.

There are varied opportunities for children to write and to name their work and very good use of numbers in everyday routines. These include activities which encourage sorting, matching, adding and subtracting.

Children are provided with good access to technology through use of the computer and other technological equipment to investigate and explore.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's confidence and self-esteem are built up by staff who understand their needs and know them well. They are encouraged to be independent and to persist with difficult tasks, such as threading pasta to make necklaces. They choose between activities, select resources for themselves and take care of their personal needs, such as fetching tissues, washing their hands and getting dressed. Children behave well. They learn to share and take turns, to be polite and considerate to others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are keen to communicate with staff and each other during activities. They enjoy listening to stories, but they are not sufficiently encouraged to use books independently as they are on a table with play food and next to the home corner. Children are encouraged to recognise their names, the sounds of letters and words. They are beginning to write these correctly with well-formed letters and staff successfully encourage them to understand the importance of naming their work.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children benefit from good individual support to help them count to 10 and to recognise shapes and sizes. Their understanding of numbers is reinforced as they take part in tasks such as working out the date and counting the number of boys and girls at snack time. They are asked to count during routines and activities, and to estimate how many more "beads" they can thread. They are asked good questions during activities, such as how many pieces cut from dough and if these are big or small.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

The small world toys and home corner are used well to stimulate children's interest in the events in their families and the community. They investigate different countries and planned activities help them notice similarities and differences in their lives: they cook and taste pizza when learning about Italy. Children have good access to technology and enjoy learning to use appropriate computer programmes, investigating and exploring natural objects and using magnifying glasses and calculators.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children enjoy using circuits set up and tricycling around obstacles, balancing on stepping stones as well as using hoops. They are set challenges, like threading pasta tubes onto necklace strings and staff are on hand to give support and encourage new skills such as threading and using scissors and needles. Children learn to handle scissors, pencils and paintbrushes as well as completing puzzles with increasing control. Children enjoy performing action rhymes and songs and do so with skill.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children participate enthusiastically in movement sessions, using their imagination to jump like frogs, or walk like elephants. They produce simple rhymes and use a variety of instruments to explore rhythms and sounds during regular music sessions. Children draw freely with good selections of colours and learn to apply paint in different ways. Children enjoy playing in role play activities which are varied and interesting and staff support these well.

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

- organise an area where children can regularly access books comfortably and quietly
- limit the amount of distraction experienced by children through reorganising the activities and resources
- ensure assessments provide clear links to identify and plan for the next steps for individual children's learning, using the stepping stones and early learning goals

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.