



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 109900

DfES Number: 583518

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 18/05/2004
Inspector Name Anne Munro

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Mulberry Preschool
Setting Address Community Centre
Pilgrims Close, Valley Park, Chandlers Ford
Eastleigh
Hampshire
SO53 4ST

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Mulberry Pre-School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Mulberry Pre-School
Address Valley Park Community Centre
Pilgrims Close, Chandler's Ford
Eastleigh
Hampshire
SO53 4ST

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and 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

Mulberry Preschool opened in 1989 It operates in the local community centre with access to the main hall, a smaller side room, kitchen, toilets and an outside play area. The preschool is a community group managed by a voluntary committee of parents. Children attend from the immediate local area. The setting is registered to accept up to 26 children aged from 2 to under 5 years. There are currently 68 children on roll, including 36 funded 3 year olds and 22 funded 4 year olds. The preschool supports a small number of children with special needs and with English as their second language.

The preschool opens five days a week in term time. Sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 on Monday to Friday with afternoon sessions on Monday and Tuesday from 12:30 to 15:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are 10 part-time members of staff working with the children, including 6 with early years qualification to NVQ level 2 or 3 and 2 working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Hampshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is a member of the Preschool Learning Alliance.

How good is the Day Care?

Mulberry Preschool provides good care for children. An active management committee provides strong support to a well qualified and experienced staff and enables them to continue updating their skills and knowledge with ongoing training. Staff and committee work well together to provide children with a comfortable and well-resourced learning environment. Most policies and procedures are in place to ensure the smooth running of the preschool.

Regular risk assessments are carried out and precautions are in place to safeguard children. All staff have current first aid qualification and are aware of the preschool's procedures for handling illness or injury. The preschool actively promotes healthy eating and caters sensitively for children with special dietary needs.

Staff monitor children's progress effectively and have good understanding of individual needs. They use their knowledge of the children when planning a balanced curriculum of activities that stimulate children's interest and promote their learning. Staff are experienced in caring for children with special educational needs and work with other professionals and carers to ensure that all are included. They use praise and encouragement to promote self-esteem and good behaviour so that children play well together and are confident in their interaction with adults.

Good working relationships are developed with parents and carers, based on sharing of information. Parents are able to discuss their children's progress and have regular access to records. They are made welcome in the group and are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. They serve on the management committee and help in sessions and are invited to join in social and fundraising events.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- The premises are warm and welcoming, with plenty of safe play space. A secure outside play area is accessed directly from the main playroom and children are able to move freely between the inside and outside areas. Space is well organised and staff make good use of both the outside area and the local environment.
- The committee has appointed a health and safety officer who carries out regular risk assessments and safety checks. Staff have good understanding of safety requirements and procedures, and have appropriate precautions in place to safeguard children.
- Staff promote healthy eating with nutritious snacks and encourage children to be independent in serving themselves. The needs of children with special dietary requirements are respected.
- Staff liaise with parents and other professionals in producing individual education plans to ensure that children's special needs are met. Any extra resources are provided and activities adapted if necessary.

What needs to be improved?

- records of attendance
- the complaints procedure
- authorisation for emergency medical treatment.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
2	ensure that times of attendance are included in the register.
7	request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.
12	amend the complaints procedure to include Ofsted as the registering body.

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 Mulberry Preschool is acceptable and of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have sound knowledge of the early learning goals and all contribute to planning a balanced curriculum of activities, differentiated to meet the needs of individual children. An effective keyworker system ensures that staff have very good understanding of children's abilities. They use appropriate teaching methods, asking questions and making suggestions to develop learning. They are particularly good at planning imaginative role play situations that promote learning across all areas. They provide a stimulating environment, both inside and out, enabling children to make choices and develop independence. They use praise and encouragement to promote good behaviour and liaise with other professionals to ensure that any special needs are met.

Leadership and management of the setting are very good. An active committee of parents provides strong support to the staff. As well as giving practical help, they take responsibility for finance and ensure that the setting is well-resourced. They are responsible for recruitment and employment and operate a staff appraisal system, identifying training needs and supporting staff in accessing training. The supervisor provides strong leadership, ensuring that staff are deployed effectively and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Committee and staff together constantly evaluate provision and plan to improve and develop the preschool.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents receive good information about the group and its activities and are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. They are made welcome in the group and are able to discuss their children's progress with keyworkers. They are encouraged to help in sessions and to join in fundraising events and outings.

What is being done well?

- Staff plan the curriculum according to children's needs. Plans are closely linked to the early learning goals and make clear the intended learning outcomes, differentiating activities for individual children. They include information for staff about the input and resources needed and are shared with parents so they can be involved.
- Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are actively involved in sessions, offering expertise and experience in topics, as well as helping on a parents' rota and joining in fundraising efforts. Good working relationships are developed between parents and staff, and parents are able to share in the process of assessing and recording their children's progress.
- Staff plan exciting role play situations which stimulate children's imagination

and promote learning in all areas. The 'airport departure lounge', for example, offered many opportunities for using writing and number, as well as talking about destinations and recalling past experiences, and in the 'jungle camp' children were using torches and binoculars, looking at books and writing lists of animals seen, wearing animal masks and moving as animals, as well as negotiating small spaces in tents and dens.

- Children use emergent writing in many activities and learn to form recognisable letters using different media, tracing shapes in sand and shaving foam as well as using pencils and crayons. They all attempt to write their names, many successfully, and older children are able to write labels and captions, copying words from books or helped by staff to link sounds and letters.
- Children show good levels of independence and confidence. They choose from a range of activities and move freely between the inside and outside play areas. They dress themselves, hang up aprons and put their own paintings on the rack to dry. They are able to choose when they want their snacks, to help themselves to fruit or biscuits and pour their own drinks.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for calculation and problem solving
- opportunities to talk about past, present and future events.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Improvement since the last inspection is generally good.

The preschool was asked to provide "more opportunities for children to associate sounds made by letters to words". Children are encouraged to bring in objects starting with this week's letter and put them in the "sounds box". Staff and children talk about the objects in circle time. Staff also encourage children to identify initial letters throughout activities, for example when talking about days of the week or when writing their names.

The second requirement was for "freedom for children to use their knowledge and understanding of mathematics to solve problems". This has partly been addressed in that children are asked such questions as how many bowls are needed when cooking, or if there is room for one more child at the table. They learn to take one away in number rhymes, but have limited opportunities for simple addition or subtraction in planned activities.

The preschool was also asked to provide "more opportunities for children to explore materials and develop technical skills of cutting, joining and gluing them together". Children are developing good skills with scissors, cutting shapes and gluing their own collage pictures. They use recycled materials for modelling on a regular basis.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are able to sit quietly and listen attentively in story and circle times, and concentrate for quite long periods at their chosen activities. They relate confidently to adults and play well alongside other children, learning to take turns and share. They are developing very good levels of independence, particularly in serving themselves at snack time. Staff use praise and encouragement to foster children's self-esteem and pride in their work, and to reinforce good behaviour.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. Clear labelling around the playroom makes them familiar with written words and they frequently use emergent writing in role play situations. All children attempt to write their names, many of them recognisable, and older children copy words to write captions to their work. They are learning about the links between sounds and letters. Staff constantly engage them in conversation, developing language skills and introducing new vocabulary.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Staff make counting an integral part of daily activities so all children are confident in counting to five and many can count to ten and beyond. Both three and four year olds can recognise and use numerals but they have less opportunity to use simple calculation. Children learn about shape and size, sort and match and recreate patterns with various resources. They practise mathematical language when playing with sand, playdough and construction toys.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Staff plan a good range of topics to stimulate children's interest in the world around them. Children learn about their community and their environment from visitors and from walks around the local area. They study natural objects and record their findings in art work. They learn about their own and other cultures but do not often discuss past and future events in their lives. They design and build with construction toys and use simple technology to support their learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children develop good spatial awareness manoeuvring ride-on toys around the outside area, avoiding other children and activities. They use large apparatus such as climbing frame, balancing beams, tunnel and parachute games to develop control and co-ordination, and practise new skills with balls, beanbags and hoops. They show increasing manipulative skills in using a variety of tools and resources such as pencils, scissors, paintbrushes, threading, playdough, small world and construction toys.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn about colour, texture and shape using a variety of techniques and media, including, painting, drawing, collage and printing, and have plenty of opportunity to express their own ideas in art activities. They use percussion instruments to learn about sound and rhythm, and join in songs and rhymes with enthusiasm. Staff organise a wide variety of exciting and stimulating role play situations that enable children to develop imagination and act out 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:
- opportunities for children to use simple calculation in planned activities
- the organisation of circle time to allow children to talk about past and present events in their lives.

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.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.