



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127343

DfES Number: 520749

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 25/11/2004
Inspector Name Vanessa Wood

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Little Stars Pre-School
Setting Address c/o Southborough School
Stagshaw Close, Postley Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 6TL

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Little Stars Pre-School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Little Stars Pre-School
Address c/o Southborough School
Stagshaw Close, Postley Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 6TL

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

Little Stars Pre School opened in 1997 and operates from a mobile unit in the grounds of Southborough Primary School. It is situated in the town of Maidstone.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre school at any one time. The pre School is open each weekday from 09:00 until 11:30 and on a Tuesday from 12:30 until 15:00 for 37 weeks of the year. Children have access to a secure outside play area.

There are currently 28 children on roll aged from 2 to 5 years. Of these 24 receive funding for nursery education. Children come mostly from the local area. No children attend with special educational needs and no children attend with English as an additional language.

The pre school employs five members of staff. Four of the staff, including the supervisor, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

How good is the Day Care?

Little Stars Pre School provides good quality care for children.

Staff have been in post for many years and work well together and support one another. They provide a warm, welcoming, fun environment to enable young children to feel secure. The group is well managed but would benefit from making the operational plan one document. Staff are deployed effectively and a high staff to children ratio is maintained at all times. Staff are aware of their individual roles and responsibilities.

Staff are vigilant in ensuring children's safety. A risk assessment of the premises is completed regularly and each day staff ensure the room is clean and all hazards have been made safe. Staff actively promote good hygiene practices in the pre school.

A wide range of activities are provided and set out in an attractive way that offers

stimulating play opportunities to meet the needs of developing children. Staff build good relationships with children and are sensitive to their individual needs. Children are happy and approach staff with confidence.

Staff have a good relationship with parents and provide good information about the pre school and the activities they do. Good policies and procedures are in place to ensure the effective and safe management of the provision although one policy needs updating.

What has improved since the last inspection?

A written policy for the procedure to be followed should a child become lost or uncollected is not in place.

All policies have been reviewed and re written and are comprehensive except the policy for child protection which lacks a procedure to be followed should a member of staff be accused of abusing a child.

The record of attendance now shows clearly the hours of children's attendance and departure and the number of adults present.

What is being done well?

- A high staff to children ratio is maintained at all times to ensure children are cared for appropriately.
- Activities are planned to provide an interesting and stimulating balance of activities to promote children's development and learning.
- Staff ensure children are safe and kept secure at the pre school. Regular risk assessments are carried out and action taken to make all hazards safe.
- A good working relationship is fostered with parents and all information is shared.

What needs to be improved?

- the operational plan to ensure this is one document
- the child protection policy to ensure this is in line with current legislation.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

Since 1 April 2004 Ofsted have not received any complaints about this provider.

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	Consider making the operational plan one document.
13	Ensure the child protection policy is updated to include current legislation.

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 Little Stars Pre School is acceptable and of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. The established staff are secure in their knowledge of the curriculum. All staff are friendly and enthusiastic and they interact well with the children. They provide clear explanations and use questions well to encourage children to think logically. They guide children towards acceptable behaviour and an awareness of right and wrong. Staff work well as a team. They are deployed effectively to support individual and group activities. Sessions are organised and well planned, although large group activities are less successful and do not allow for more able children to be extended. Children have opportunities to make choices about their learning in free play times. Assessments of children's progress are informative and used appropriately to plan future activities based on what children already know and can do. Teaching is monitored informally, but effectively, given the small number of staff who work together. However, activity sheets are not evaluated to show how the learning intentions are met or how the activity can be extended for more able children.

Leadership and management is generally good. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and support one another well. The committee is effective and gives good support to staff.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents receive information about the curriculum and topics. They are welcomed into the group and encouraged to join the committee.

What is being done well?

- Staff provide an attractive, stimulating environment in which children are interested and eager to learn.
- Staff use good strategies to promote good behaviour and consideration for others.
- Staff promote children's learning well and there is a good balance of adult directed and child initiated activities.
- Partnership with parents is effective and parents take an active role on the committee.

What needs to be improved?

- the evaluation of activity sheets to show whether the learning intention is met

and how the activity could be extended for more able children

- the management of daily routines to reinforce children's knowledge and understanding and reflect on what they know.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre school has made very good progress since the last inspection when two key issues were identified.

Staff were asked to develop their knowledge of the stepping stones. All staff now have a copy of the Curriculum Planning for the Foundation Stage and have attended workshops on 'Working with the Early Learning Goals'.

Staff were asked to provide more information for parents on the early learning goals. These are now displayed on the Notice Board and in the prospectus .

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are happy to initiate conversations with adults, they work well together in small groups, play independently if they want and are sufficiently confident to choose what they want to do during free play. They are taught to share and take turns, and to be polite and considerate to others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's listening skills are developing well and they enjoy listening to the story and predicting what will happen next. Children speak with confidence and their vocabulary is extending with help from staff. Most children recognise their name and some are beginning to write their name confidently.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children can count to ten and beyond with confidence. They are given good support to recognise numerals during everyday routines such as working out the date. Children are introduced to simple adding and taking away through simple number songs. They are learning to recognise shapes and enjoy sequencing activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Planned activities help children notice changes that occur for example when looking at autumn and the changes to nature. Children carefully construct models using good resources and use a range of materials. Children learn about the environment through topics and daily routines.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have access to outside play space and good resources are available to promote gross motor skills. Children are taught to handle and control small objects and have a developing control of using scissors, glue and paint.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children confidently express their ideas through a range of materials and media. They draw freely and paint in different ways. Role play activities are varied and interesting and children draw on their experiences and imagination as they act out scenarios that they know.

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

- develop information about adult led activities to ensure these reports fully evaluate the extent to which the learning intentions have been met and how the activity can be extended for more able children
- further develop the management of daily routines, in order to build on children's experiences and reinforce what they know and to ensure there is enough challenge for older children.

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.