



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 307135

DfES Number: 510674

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 15/11/2004
Inspector Name Susan Janet Lee

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Elm Cottage Day Nursery
Setting Address 11 Crescent Park
Stockport
Cheshire
SK4 2HS

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Yvonne Margaret Thomas

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

Elm Cottage Day Nursery is one of five provisions run by Elm Cottage Group Day Care. It opened in 1989 and operates from a large detached property situated on Crescent Park in Stockport. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 until 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year.

Children have access to playrooms on the ground and first floor and bathroom facilities. There is a rear garden which includes a soft play area available for outdoor play.

There are currently 92 children aged from three months to four years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery serves the local community and parents/carers who commute into Stockport. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

Fourteen staff work with the children. Nine staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Early years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Elm Cottage Day Nursery provides good quality care for children. Staff develop warm relationships with the children, who are happy, secure and confident in their care. Space is well organised and children are grouped according to their age and stage of development. There is an extensive range of furniture, toys and equipment available to help the children progress in all areas of their development. This includes a good selection of resources that reflect diversity; helping to raise children's awareness of the world around them. Documentation is well organised; however, there are a few omissions.

The premises are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness, repair and

decoration. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the environment in which children are cared for is safe and secure. Staff exercise good hygiene practices and clear routines are in place. Children's dietary requirements are met sensitively and in accordance with parent's wishes. The staff have a clear awareness of child protection issues. They work closely with parents and other agencies to enable them to best meet children's special needs.

Children are engaged in a range of activities that are interesting, fun and stimulating. Effective systems are in place for monitoring children's progress. Staff deploy themselves well to enable them to offer good care and support to the children. They sit on the same level as the children as they play and interact with them at every opportunity to extend language, encourage imaginative play and support mathematical thinking. The staff have a good awareness of individual children's needs and meet these needs well; children's individual routines are respected and followed. The behaviour management policy works well in practice.

Staff build good working relationships with parents. Effective systems are in place to keep parents informed about the provision and their children's activities.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the provider agreed to address a number of issues relating to children's privacy, safety and documentation.

Dividers have been built between the toilets; improving children's privacy when using the bathroom. The shed in the garden now has a lock fitted; making it inaccessible to children. Documentation has been reviewed to include records of existing injuries and the complaints procedure now includes Ofsted's contact details; resulting in a safer environment for children.

What is being done well?

- The environment is bright, stimulating, warm and welcoming. Children's artwork is displayed at child height. The setting displays a good range of positive images as a means of promoting equality of opportunity.
- Babies interact with consistent adults at frequent intervals. They are able to move around freely to practice their physical skills such as sitting, crawling and walking. Staff are responsive to children's interests; for example, a baby spends time looking in a mirror, a member of staff talks to him about his facial features, pointing them out to him in the mirror.
- Children have lots of opportunities to explore and investigate different resources and textures, for example, sand, water, gloop and musical instruments. A child is enthralled in play with "gloop" (a mixture of water and cornflour), staff talk to him about the consistency, using descriptive words such as cold, sticky and soft. Children are confident and enthusiastic in their play.
- Staff clearly understand the behaviour management policy and apply it consistently in practice. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement

and their achievements are celebrated, which raises their confidence and self esteem. Staff are warm and respectful towards the children, who respond and behave well.

- Parents are provided with a wealth of information about the setting. This is in the form of a handbook, policies, procedures and regular newsletters. Children's progress reports are shared with parents on a regular basis. Parents are very happy with the service provided, levels of care and activities afforded.

What needs to be improved?

- the documentation regarding written parental consent and the child protection procedure.

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.)

There are no complaints to report.

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
14	Request written parental consent for emergency medical attention and update the child protection procedure to include the procedure to follow regarding allegations made against staff, should the need arise.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Elm Cottage Day Nursery offers high quality nursery education overall. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staffs' clear understanding of the early learning goals are interpreted into imaginative and interesting activities. They provide opportunities for children across a balanced curriculum covering all six learning areas indoors. The rooms and resources are creatively organised to maximize the space, arouse children's interest and curiosity and encourage their independence and decisiveness. Staff observe and assess aspects of children's learning and development frequently, using them to plan children's next steps. They explain things clearly to children and employ effective questioning techniques encouraging children's thought processes. Staff skilfully manage children's behaviour in a positive, non-confrontational and calm manner.

The leadership and management are very good. Clear lines of communication and effective support mechanisms underpin the confidence and professionalism of staff and sustain the harmonious working environment. Rigorous systems are in place to effectively monitor and evaluate the provision and these clearly identify strengths and areas for development.

Partnership with parents is very good. Effective links are formed with parents which involve them in their children's learning. Information regarding children's progress is shared regularly, both informally and formally.

What is being done well?

- Language, literacy and mathematics are an integral part of the curriculum. Children take advantage of the many meaningful opportunities to speak, listen, read, write and use their understanding of number and mathematical concepts. Staff effectively question children to challenge their thinking and encourage them to reflect on their actions and learning. They introduce children to a wide vocabulary through discussion, stories and conversation.
- Good settling and transitional procedures promote children's security. Good relationships are formed with the children who are valued as individuals and treated with respect, sensitivity and warmth. Staff reward children's efforts, achievements and appropriate behaviour with positive praise boosting their self-esteem and confidence.
- The learning environment is organised effectively and invitingly to stimulate children's natural curiosity and interest. Displays of children's own work, interactive displays, photographs, positive imagery, colourful learning aids and charts enhance children's development and learning. The arrangement

of activities and resources encourage children to make choices, select resources and become more self-sufficient.

- The setting works closely with parents providing good sources of information regarding topics and activities and their links to the foundation stage of learning. Continual written and verbal information and effective consultation helps parents to feel involved and be involved in children's learning and nursery life. Parents are encouraged into the setting to share their skills and experiences for example, a mum told the children French stories and another brought in her new baby and demonstrated bath time.
- Robust policies, procedures and operational systems are clearly owned and reflected in the daily practice of a staff team who have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

What needs to be improved?

- the extension of outdoor play activities to support children in all areas of learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting has made very good progress in providing further opportunities for children to know about the uses of technology in its various forms.

Staff have worked closely to identify how they could strengthen and widen children's understanding of simple everyday technology through first hand experiences and have implemented these opportunities into their educational program. Children perceptively use a washing machine and a microwave in their role-play, they confidently use a listening centre, a roamer and a personal computer and explore the internal workings of a radio. Children are gaining a good awareness of simple technology and its everyday uses.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy, confident, curious and motivated. Children relate well to each other and work successfully in groups for example, when they build a bridge for Billy Goat Gruff. They concentrate well at self-chosen tasks and purposefully select resources to extend their play. Children are eager to be the 'daily helper' where they take on responsibility such as feeding the fish or giving out drinks. Children are thoughtful, polite and well-behaved and are learning to be self-sufficient.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are good communicators. They express themselves well using a wide vocabulary and listen carefully to others, instructions and explanations. They understand print as a form of communication such as when they take food orders, make shopping lists and invitations. They enjoy 'reading' books, produce their own information books and can re-tell their favourite stories. Children can form many recognisable letter shapes and match them successfully to their sounds.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are gaining a confident understanding of number and use it well to support their play such as, when they require two equal towers of bricks to support their bridge. They recognise and recreate patterns they see around them and explore size in activities such as measuring the tables and chairs and who is tallest, using hand spans and a measuring stick. Children confidently describe events using simple mathematical language such as small, medium, lightest, empty, more than and less than.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore, investigate and discover for themselves in practical activities such as using a metal detector, making paper boats and planes that float and fly and mixing vinegar and bicarbonate to inflate a balloon. They build small and large models using an abundance of materials and techniques and are developing good making skills. Children are strengthening their understanding of the wider world. They celebrate diwali and experience a visit from a blind lady and her guide dog.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children's physical skills are developing well. Children demonstrate good control when running, jumping and balancing across the plank bridge. They stretch up and over objects and crawl under and through spaces and move imaginatively when being trolls and goats. Children handle small tools competently. They use scissors, cutlery and dough cutters accurately and sensibly. Children manoeuvre wheeled vehicles skilfully, manipulate materials proficiently and throw, catch and kick balls.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children express themselves creatively in art, music, role-play and stories. They explore the properties of materials, apply paint in different ways and draw freely and observationally. Children perceptively act-out stories, rhymes and their own experiences. They sing a wide repertoire of songs tunefully, investigate instruments and their sounds and explore rhythm, for example, tapping out beat with two fingers against their palm.

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 point;
- continue to develop outdoor activities and opportunities which support children in all areas of 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.

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.