



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 650157

DfES Number: 530241

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 11/02/2005
Inspector Name Patricia Mary Champion

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Thundersley Methodist Preschool
Setting Address Kennington Avenue
Benfleet
Essex
SS7 4BS

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Thundersley Methodist Preschool

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Thundersley Methodist Preschool
Address Kennington Avenue
Benfleet
Essex
SS7 4BS

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

Thundersley Methodist Pre-school is run by a committee. It opened in 1972. The pre-school operates from the main hall and a smaller room within the Methodist Church building, located within walking distance of schools and shops. The staff secure the car park to create an enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group opens three days a week during school term times. Session times are from 09:30 until 12:15 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

There are currently 31 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special needs.

The pre-school employs eight staff. Five of the staff, including the manager have early years qualifications. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP), the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and the Castlepoint Cluster Group.

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 Thundersley Methodist Pre-school is good. It enables children to make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional, mathematical and creative development and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

Teaching is generally good. The staff are developing a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum through training. They organise a stimulating environment for children to explore and make good use of a wide range of equipment and resources. The staff effectively promote learning through play to support the setting's child-centred ethos. A well-balanced routine allows children to play and learn independently, initiate their own ideas and also take part in activities which need more support and direction. Staff have continually revised and refined the written planning. However they do not identify how activities can be adapted to challenge older children and the assessment records are not yet used to effectively inform future planning. An extremely effective system is now in place to support children with special needs.

Leadership and management are generally good. The supervisor and staff work well as a team. They are strongly committed to the improvement of care and education for all children. All staff have input into planning and delivering the curriculum. However there is no formal system for staff appraisal and although minutes are kept regarding committee meetings, staff meetings are not recorded.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are provided with information about the setting; regular newsletters inform them of coming events but do not always include the topics the children are working on. Not all parents are fully aware that they can see their children's records. Fundraising for charity events is very successful and parents enjoy the annual sports day. Parents speak very positively about their children's care and education in the pre-school.

What is being done well?

- The staff are enthusiastic, strongly motivated, and work well as a team. They have high expectations of behaviour, promote and achieve good levels of independence, self-esteem and confidence with each child. Children are developing a strong sense of community as they take part in charity events and fundraising.
- Children experience a good range of purposeful activities to enable them to make excellent progress in their mathematical development. They accurately count every day objects, use simple calculation skills and relate shape to the environment. Good quality resources are used extremely effectively. Staff use meaningful situations to put number learning into context for children.

- All aspects of creative development are valued and well resourced. Children incorporate their own ideas into making gifts, models and pictures and are delighted with their individual pieces of work. An excellent range of themed resources allows children to play purposefully within their role-play scenarios. They take pleasure in singing and have a wide repertoire of songs.
- There is now an excellent system in place to support children with special needs. The appointed Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is well qualified and committed to further training. She actively seeks out advice and implements individual education plans. Consistent strategies and alternative communication such as visual aids are used extremely effectively to enable children who need extra support to make the best possible progress.

What needs to be improved?

- the system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of nursery education
- the use of the outdoor area
- the assessment records and how these are shared with parents.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The last inspection for nursery education was undertaken in July 2001 and five key issues were raised. Although some issues have been addressed more effectively than others, generally good progress has been made.

The staff have worked hard to ensure that the written planning includes links to the early learning goals for all six areas and identifies what they intend children to learn.

The staff have increased their knowledge of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. There is now a fully trained Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO.)

The programme for communication language and literacy has improved. There are now more opportunities for the children to practice writing skills in everyday situations such as making lists in role-play. Children also recognise their first names on their name cards, however there is not always sufficient challenge offered to older or more able children. There are fewer opportunities for children to recognise their surnames or other simple words on labels in the environment.

The staff have developed a curriculum folder to provide information for parents about the educational programme. They now plan to add information about each area of learning to the prospectus.

At the last inspection the staff were asked to extend the assessment system for monitoring and recording children's attainment and progress. The system currently used does not provide links to all aspects of children's learning or the stepping stones and staff have not been entering the date of their observations. The staff

have already identified a new method of recording children's progress and achievements and plan to start using this new system as soon as possible.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children enter the hall with confidence and immediately seek out new activities. They are very busy and interested in their play throughout the session and show perseverance and good concentration skills. Independence skills are fostered well during snack time. Children spread butter on scotch pancakes and pour drinks of water. They help tidy up and respond to staff's expectations for good behaviour. Children build friendships and show respect by thanking their peers.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children interact well, talking confidently to staff and visitors. They are learning new words linked to topics and themes and enjoy explaining their ideas. There are very good opportunities for children to look at books and they enjoy reading for pleasure. They become absorbed in stories, anticipating what may happen next. Children are learning to write their names. However the opportunities to link sounds to letters provide insufficient challenge for the older children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children count to ten and beyond and recognise numerals by using number names as they play and learn. They use calculation skills as they count, sort and group objects. Children explore volume and capacity as they use measuring jugs in water play. They can identify and name shapes of everyday items in the environment. Children enjoy number puzzles and use mathematical computer programmes. They talk about and recreate simple patterns and show a good awareness for symmetry.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children investigate objects and materials and explore using magnets, cogs and wheels. They learn about information technology by using the computer. Work planned around the themes and topics stimulates the children's interest and curiosity about people who help us. Celebrating festivals allows children to gain an awareness of cultures and beliefs from around the world. Opportunities for children to find out more about the natural world are not fully exploited in the outdoor area.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move with confidence around the hall. They have a wide range of both large and small equipment available to enable them to climb and balance. Soft play sessions are organised. Children show good control when using tools, holding pencils correctly and using paintbrushes and glue sticks with precision. They enjoy manipulating play dough by patting and rolling. There are missed opportunities to discuss health and hygiene issues with children prior to eating.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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| Judgement: | Very Good |
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Children are given opportunities to discover and explore colour, texture, shape and form in both two and three dimensions. They recognise colours and explore what happens when colours are mixed when painting. Children show great interest in what they see and feel and enjoy making Mother's Day cards and gifts. Music is integrated into the curriculum with children singing rhymes and exploring sounds with musical instruments. Children have good imaginative skills, demonstrated through role-play.

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 a formal system for monitoring and evaluating the provision for nursery education. Consider how more use could be made of the outdoor area and how activities can be adapted to provide more challenge for the older or more able children
- continue to develop the children's assessment records to ensure that they link to the stepping stones and all aspects of learning. Ensure that staff date their observations of children's achievements and consider how the children's progress towards the early learning goals can be shared more formally with parents.

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.