



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127688

DfES Number: 516785

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 16/09/2004
Inspector Name Tracy Larnach

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care, Out of School Day Care
Setting Name The Firs Nursery and Time Out Club
Setting Address Chartham Primary School
Shalmsford Street, Chartham
Canterbury
Kent
CT4 7QN

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of The Firs Nursery and Time Out Club

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name The Firs Nursery and Time Out Club
Address Shalmsford Street
Chartham
Canterbury
Kent
CT4 7QN

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

The Firs Nursery School opened in 1994. It operates from a large wooden building in the grounds of Chartham Primary School. Time Out, out of school club, also operates from the same facility. The nursery and out of school club have access to two rooms, an office, toilets, a kitchen and an outside area. They serve the local area and surrounding villages.

There are currently 52 children on roll. This includes 36 funded 3 and 4-year-olds. Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The nursery staff have experience of working with children who have special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week, term time only. Sessions are from 09.00 to 11.45 and from 12.30 to 15.15. Children may stay all day. The out of school club operates from 15.15 to 17.30. The nursery coordinates with the school to offer cooked meals or parents may provide a packed lunch.

There are eight staff who work with the children, of these, six have early years qualifications and attend short courses. The nursery receives support from a Pre-School Learning Alliance development worker.

There are four staff who work with the children in the out of school club. One of these has a qualification in play work, one has an early years qualification and is completing a play work qualification. Another member of staff has enrolled on a play work course.

How good is the Day Care?

The Firs Nursery and Time Out, the out of school club, provide satisfactory care for children. Staff provide a comfortable and welcoming environment; they are qualified, organised and work effectively as a team. They maintain a close liaison with the local school, which benefits the children. Documentation is generally good, however

the settings may benefit from coordinating together on their policies and procedures.

Staff give a high priority to children's safety; a weekly risk assessments is completed, fire drills are regularly accomplished and all staff hold a current first aid certificate. An attendance record is maintained, but it did not accurately reflect the lunch time session. Children learn about health and hygiene through routines such as hand washing. Children are provided with regular drinks. Snack and lunchtime is relaxed and sociable. The staff are aware of child protection procedures, and are knowledgeable about what to look for. However, they did not have the most current information published.

During 'choosing time' children are able to select from a broad range of toys and activities. These are set out by the staff and although children have input, they are not able to self-select from the shelves. There is a good balance between self-initiated and adult supported activities. Staff are interested in what the children say and ask open-ended questions. However, the nursery day has many large group gatherings, which are teacher directed and sometimes difficult to sustain the children's interest, thus resulting in reminders to listen. Children are well behaved and cooperate well with each other. There is a trained special educational needs coordinator, who works with other professionals and parents. The out of school club has a new manager who is developing the group to further to benefit the children.

The parents interviewed and questionnaires indicated that they were happy with their children's care. Parents receive regular newsletters.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- Staff are qualified, organised and work effectively as a team. The manager has a commitment to ongoing staff development and regularly sends staff to training sessions. There is a trained special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), who works with other professionals and the parents. There is evidence of the use of Makaton and the Picture Exchange System (PECS).
- The staff maintain a close liaison with the local school, which benefits the children. They are able to use the gymnasium and are invited to special events in the school. This results in the children having a smooth transition to school.
- Staff give a high priority to children's safety. Regular risk assessments are completed. There is a system in place for parents to inform the nursery of variations to their usual contact information and collection arrangements.
- Snack and lunchtime is a relaxed and sociable experience for the children. Children may have a cooked lunch provided by the school meals service or parents can provide a packed lunch. Tablecloths are provided, staff sit with the children, and pleasant and meaningful conversations take place.

- Children were observed playing imaginative games, for example, dressing up, using a bench as a pirate ship and a broom as an anchor. Children are well behaved and cooperate well with each other.

What needs to be improved?

- the accuracy of the attendance register
- the accuracy of the medication log
- the daily routine
- staff awareness of the local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures
- the opportunities to promote children's independence
- the liaison between the nursery and out of school club.

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

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 registration arrangements show when children, staff and visitors are present at all times.
3	Consider ways to minimise the amount of time children sit in large groups.
7	Ensure the written record is signed by parents after medicines are given to children.
13	Further develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, ensuring that they are aware of the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The Firs Nursery provision is acceptable and of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The nursery provides children with a warm, caring and welcoming environment.

The overall quality of teaching is generally good. Staff work positively with all children, encouraging them to be confident and self-assured. Staff have a clear knowledge of the early learning goals. They plan a balanced range of activities and set clear challenges for children allowing them to make appropriate progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

Staff provide good support to children during the activities they complete and are aware of their responsibilities throughout each session. Although children are able to select equipment independently, opportunities for personal independence at meal times are limited. Children are generally encouraged to use their own ideas, however, some activities involve children working to a set goal with limited opportunities for self-exploration and use of imagination.

The effectiveness of assessment and curriculum planning is generally good. Staff have introduced a comprehensive assessment system and make detailed observations of children's progress. Staff know children well, however, information from assessment is not always used effectively to inform the planning of activities.

The overall quality of leadership and management is generally good. Staff are appropriately led and work well together to identify weaknesses within the setting. Procedures are being implemented in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are greeted warmly when they arrive at the nursery and receive good opportunities to be informed about their children's progress in learning. Staff provide parents with detailed information about the setting and its provision.

What is being done well?

- Staff support children well. Children are confident; they work well together and have formed very good relationships.
- Children communicate well together. They speak confidently as they play freely throughout the session.
- Staff plan the daily routine well. Children experience a wide range of activities that effectively extend children's learning through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.
- The nursery is managed well. Staff work effectively together as a strong

team.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to develop personal independence during snack and lunchtime
- the organisation of the reading area
- opportunities for children to explore and use their imaginations throughout the activities they complete
- the use of assessment.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The nursery has made good progress in addressing the key issue identified from the previous inspection. Staff have adapted the planning of the curriculum to include detailed information about all six areas of learning. Plans clearly state the intended learning of individual activities.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children work positively and enthusiastically to complete a range of activities. They have developed good relationships together and their behaviour is good. Children confidently select resources for themselves. However, opportunities for personal independence are limited during meal times. Children are introduced to positive images of other cultures, traditions and beliefs through well-planned activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children speak confidently together in groups, communicating their ideas during free-play. Staff generally make effective use of discussion activities to develop and extend children's language skills. Good opportunities are provided for children to write freely and imaginatively as part of free-play activities. Children enjoy large group reading sessions.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children receive appropriate opportunities to count and recognise shapes as part of the daily programme of activities. A good range of mathematical equipment is available within the nursery and staff make effective use of these to encourage children to solve simple problems as part of practical and free-play activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children receive good opportunities to explore the local and wider world and to discuss their home and family life. Staff provide a good range of planned investigation activities that allow children to explore the properties of different materials. Appropriate use is made of planned activities to allow children to look closely at the differences, patterns and change of materials as part of free-play. Children use a range of materials for construction.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children receive regular opportunities to move safely and freely. Staff plan a programme of activities to allow most children to use equipment confidently and imaginatively. Good use is made of outside play facilities to allow children to experience a range of activities. Children skilfully use the range of large and small equipment, showing co-ordination and confidence. Opportunities are provided for children to develop their small manipulative skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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The children receive appropriate opportunities to respond to a variety of experiences as part of the programme of activities. Children are generally encouraged to use their imaginations to communicate their feelings. However, some activities involve children working to complete a set goal, inhibiting opportunities for children to explore their own ideas and discover independently. Children move freely to a range of music and investigate the sounds they hear.

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

- extend opportunities for children to develop their personal independence
- develop opportunities for children to use their imaginations and to explore using their own ideas and thoughts
- develop the use of assessment to inform planning to ensure children continue to make effective progress through the stepping stones towards the 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.

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.