



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 142953

DfES Number: 547701

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 11/11/2004
Inspector Name Mary Daniel

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Merryfield Preschool
Setting Address St Mary & St Peter First Schl
Copse Lane
Ilton
Somerset
TA19 9EX

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Merryfield Pre-School 1045061

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Merryfield Pre-School
Address St Mary & St Peter First School
Copse Lane, Ilton
Ilminster
Somerset
TA19 9EX

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

Merryfield Pre-School operates from a portacabin situated in the grounds of the St Mary and St Peter First School in the village of Ilton. There is an enclosed tarmac playground and surrounding grass areas available for outdoor play.

This parent-committee run pre-school is open from Monday to Friday from 09:00 - 13:15 term time only. The group morning session runs until 12:15, with the option for children to stay on for an extended period for lunch. A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time, and there are currently 18 children on register.

The pre-school is registered to receive Government funding and there are currently six funded children on roll. The group support children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

A total of five childcare staff are employed. The Manager and Deputy both have Early Years Childcare and Education qualifications. The group receive support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Merryfield Pre-School offers good quality nursery education overall and children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching is generally good. Staff form good relationships with children, which impacts well on children's learning, particularly at circle time when children listen attentively and enjoy telling their news to the group 'Teddy'. Staff provide purposeful play activities to encourage children's learning, for example, hiding a variety of interesting objects in the sand for them to explore. However, the overall planning and assessment system does not fully support staff in setting suitable challenges for children in all areas of their learning. Overall, staff maintain clear daily routines, which positively contribute to helping children feel secure in the setting, but the organisation of some times during the session does not effectively maximise the learning opportunities for children. Staff ask 'how and why?', for example, when reading a group story, which helps children think for themselves. Staff respond well to children's ideas in play, such as developing a painting activity to make a treasure map for them to explore. Staff give clear explanations and use praise often, which results in children behaving very well.

Leadership and management is generally good. Overall, there are firm procedures in place to support staff in working well as a team, and give clear areas of responsibility. The supportive parent committee meet regularly with staff, but there is no formal system in place to identify or monitor any areas for improvement .

Partnership with parents is generally good. Good relationships are formed with parents and their involvement is welcomed within the group. They are kept well informed of current events and changes, but have limited information offered on their child's daily activities, or on how each stage of their progress has been achieved.

What is being done well?

- Staff use effective questioning well. Staff ask open-ended questions to support children in learning to think for themselves, for example, as they ask children about a favourite book 'where do you think these animals would live?' and 'which animal has a baby like this?'
- Children settle easily and happily make attachments to others. They are willing to try out new experiences and take turns appropriately. Children use good manners independently, for example, as they ask politely for some more fruit at snack time.
- Children behave very well and show an understanding of the group expectations. They listen to staff and show respect for others as they patiently line up and wait for others to join them for their outside play.

- Children enjoy their songs and rhymes. They join in enthusiastically as they sing 'five fat sausages' and they all clap their hands hard to make the ' 5 fat sausages go BANG!!'

What needs to be improved?

- the system of recording children's developmental progress and planning challenges for individuals
- the organisation of some parts of the session to maximise the learning opportunities for all children
- the systems for monitoring and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the overall provision.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children settle easily and explore the play areas with interest. They sit quietly at circle time and willingly respond to their names. Children make attachments to others in their role play games, but are not always effectively supported to develop concentration in other activities. They take turns to tell the group teddy their news and often use good manners. Children celebrate community events together and join with the local school to raise money for charity.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enthusiastically join in with favourite songs and repeated refrains. Most children use language confidently to express their thoughts, for example, in discussing recent firework displays, but they are seldom linking sounds with letters. Children are developing their hand-eye co-ordination skills well in planned activities, such as when using scissors or paint brushes. They enjoy the group story, but are not encouraged to look at books independently due to organisation of the book area.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are often using numbers spontaneously in play, for example, as they count how many pieces of apple they have eaten at snack time. They sing songs such as '5 fat sausages' and count how many are left, but are not regularly building on these skills or becoming aware of written numbers in play. Children recognise squares and triangles on the computer programme. They use positional language well in the story of the 'bear hunt' and decide whether they can go under, over or through the river.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children explore with enjoyment as they collect conkers, and dig for worms. They find sycamore seeds to fly like helicopters and discover change as they make play dough. Children show interest in how and why things happen as they make bubbles in water play. They see how others live through topical activities, but their awareness of further aspects of diversity is not promoted as well. Children happily investigate construction materials, and join the train track together.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move confidently around the play ground, most pedalling their bikes with pleasure. They balance with care in the obstacle course, but do not regularly develop these skills further in more structured and challenging tasks. Children recognise their own needs as they realise their hands need washing after painting. Children develop good hand-eye co-ordination as they roll out their play dough and they carefully pour out their own drinks at snack time.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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| Judgement: | Generally Good |
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Children enjoy exploring colour and texture, such as with marble painting, when they see the colours mix together. Children move in different ways as they do foot painting to the music. Children use their imagination well as they become involved in their role play. They show interest in creative activities but cannot always independently access a good variety of materials to express or support their own ideas in play. Children show delight as they make 'wibble, wobble' moves to the jelly song.

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

- improve upon the organisation of some parts of the session to maximise children's learning opportunities, and to encourage their overall concentration and interest
- extend the assessment system to ensure all areas of children's achievements are clearly evidenced to sufficiently inform staff in setting suitable levels of challenge in the planning of further activities
- develop a system to monitor and evaluate the overall provision to allow weakness to be identified and improvements made.

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.