



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 123053

DfES Number: 500227

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 20/04/2004
Inspector Name Pauline King

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Alphabet Nursery School
Setting Address Chatham Hall
Northcote Road
Battersea
London
SW11 6DY

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Allison Jane McKenzie-Lewis

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

Alphabet Nursery School was registered in October 1992. It is situated in a residential area, near local shops and public transport services.

The group operates from a hall with an additional room and toilet facilities. There is an area for play outside. It opens term times for morning sessions from, 09:00 - 12:00noon, Monday to Friday and, afternoon sessions from 13:15 - 15:45, Monday to Thursday. Children aged over three years attend full day from 09:00 - 15:45. A summer school operates for 3 weeks during the holidays, Monday to Friday, 09:00 - 12:00noon.

The group uses traditional and Montessori teaching methods. Staff hold the Diploma in Nursery Nursing or are Montessori trained.

How good is the Day Care?

Alphabet Nursery School provides a good standard of care for children.

The group offers a warm and welcoming environment for children and parents. Staff ratios are well implemented and procedures in place contribute towards the efficient running of the group. Space is effectively used to support the children's care and learning.

The group has comprehensive health and safety procedures and staff take positive steps to ensure that children are safe. The premises and equipment are clean and well maintained. However the hall becomes very hot and stuffy during hot weather. The staff have good understanding and working knowledge of child protection issues and children with special needs. The individual needs of the children are known by all staff and are respected and catered for well.

Children are offered age appropriate activities, which are fun and stimulating, and keep them well occupied throughout the session. There is a good selection of equipment and activities, which allow children to extend their learning and

confidence in all areas of development. Toys and resources reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity and gender but, are limited with regard to disability. Equipment and resources are organised so that they are easily accessible to the children. Staff encouraged children to be involved with activities and support them to work at their own pace. They talk to children about what they are doing in a positive manner and give lots of encouragement and praise to the children during activities. Staff have a fair and consistent approach to managing children's behaviour.

Good communication systems are in place with parents and written information is displayed on parent's notice board. Staff and parents work in partnership to meet the needs of the children. Record keeping and documentation is good, clear and up to date.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Actions set at last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. The kitchen is now inaccessible to children and significant behaviour incidents are recorded.

What is being done well?

- Good staffing ratios are in place. All staff have relevant childcare qualifications and the nursery implements a higher staff to child ratio than is required by the National Standards. Children are well supervised and supported in their activities.
- Good use is made of the space available. Staff promote good health and hygiene practices with children. Different areas allow children to play together, take part in small group work, play quietly or to participate in physical activities outside. Children's artwork is well displayed in the areas used by the nursery.
- The staff interact well with the children. They work together using a consistent approach and age appropriate methods. They focus on the children's positive behaviour, giving praise and encouragement.
- The nursery works in partnership with parents, sharing information in both verbal and written formats. Parents questionnaires state they are very happy with the service provided.

What needs to be improved?

- the ventilation of premises in hot weather
- toys and resources that reflect positive images of disability

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
4	Ensure that the premises are maintained at an adequate and comfortable temperature.
9	Ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that reflect positive images of disability.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Alphabet Nursery School provides high quality education, which enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas. Personal, social and emotional development is supported by the good relationships staff have with the children and the high expectations of behaviour.

The quality of teaching is very good. Children are achieving their potential as young learners because the staff have an excellent knowledge of the stepping stones and the early learning goals, which they use effectively in practice. Key strengths in all areas are due to excellent interaction from staff and their ability to pitch teaching at the right level for each child. Questions encourage children to think, communicate and help them move on in their learning. Staff are receptive and responsive to the children and use their time well to support children. Resources and observations of children's progress are used effectively to plan well balanced opportunities for the children to practice acquired skills and, help them develop new ones.

Leadership and management are very good. Well articulated aims are achieved in practice because the staff are skilled, work well as a team, and are consistently guided by well informed leadership and management. There is a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching. There is a shared commitment to continually assessing and improving and an ongoing programme for staff development. There are effective systems in place to support children with special needs and those with English as an additional language.

Partnership with parents is generally good and support children's learning. There is ongoing informal exchange of information between staff and parents about children's progress, although there are no formal opportunities to systematically share written records. Parents receive clear and detailed information about the educational provision through a parent's brochure, newsletters and notice board.

What is being done well?

- There are excellent opportunities for children to learn through small group activities and on an individual basis.
- Staff regularly evaluate how the children use the resources and activities, and use this information to inform, improve and extend future planning. They adapt the use of the resources according to children's individual progress and development. A system has been developed to ensure there are identified learning objectives and goals for children with special educational needs.
- Effective assessment and record keeping systems enables staff to identify the next step for each child's learning. Staff make regular written observations of children's progress, and use their observations to extend

children's learning in all areas. Their good knowledge of each child's progress, and how to use and link resources to the stepping stones, leads to a stimulating and well planned environment for children to learn.

- Communication with children is excellent. Staff are motivated and focused, and are skilled at using potential opportunities to extend children's learning through questioning and conversation.
- Staff's clear understanding of the early learning goals leads to well planned activities which engage and sustain children's interests and efforts. Effective systems for planning include clear identified learning objectives.
- Staff use excellent strategies to promote good behaviour and consideration for others. They give children clear and consistent boundaries and their calm and polite manner sets a very good example for children.
- The leadership and management of the setting is very good. The consistent involvement of the leader ensures there are excellent communication systems in place, and the provision for nursery education is effectively monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

What needs to be improved?

- the formal opportunities for parents and staff to share written information about children's individual progress and development.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. The staff have introduced a number of effective measures to improve planning and the assessment and record keeping system which were raised as points for consideration at the last inspection.

A major factor in the improvement to planning has been the introduction of identified learning objectives that are related to specific activities and are based on the stepping stones. All staff are each responsible for planning two topics a term and sharing their objectives for children's learning with other members of the team. As a result, staff have a much clearer understanding of what children are intended to learn from activities. The short term planning includes details of the resources and how they are to be used each day, which gives clearer direction to teaching and enables children to have a wide range of experiences.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have great self confidence, and are interested, excited and motivated to learn. They are very well behaved and know how to take turns and share fairly. Children choose between activities and select resources for themselves. They concentrate well, and are very persistent in trying to achieve tasks and use the Montessori resources successfully and independently. Children form excellent relationships with other children and staff.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are keen to communicate with staff and enter into conversations that include a wide range of vocabulary. They have an excellent ability to talk about things they already know for example sharing their knowledge about dinosaurs. Children interact very well with others. They listen and respond with enjoyment and attention to stories, songs, and rhymes. Children use writing spontaneously within play and write their first names with all letters correctly formed.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are very successful at solving problems of shape, size and quantity through use of the Montessori equipment. They develop a good awareness of weight and capacity through the use of sand and water and the practical life resources. Their understanding of number is reinforced through individual staff support as they take part in small group activities such as writing numbers on the ground in chalk. Children know different shapes, and use shape templates to make complicated patterns.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children have a very good knowledge of features of the natural world such as space and show interest in living things in the setting. They use effective techniques to shape, assemble and join materials, and investigate a wide selection of objects and materials such as magnets, binoculars, locks and keys and nuts and bolts. They are beginning to learn about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people and have opportunities to find out about different ways of life.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have very good co-ordination and control. They manoeuvre wheeled toys safely around the outside play area, jump on the trampoline and space hoppers, and ride bikes with trailers around cones. Staff give children sufficient time to repeat and become confident in their actions and persevere with their efforts. Children have excellent hand and eye co-ordination and are developing good control when using equipment such as scissors, tweezers, pegs, brushes and rollers and other resources.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children actively engage in role play based on their own ideas and experiences. They frequently initiate their own imaginative play with other children, and with adult support can act out narratives such as little red riding hood. Children match and change movements to music, and actively join in with singing simple songs from memory. They explore colour, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions, and use paint, draw, glue, and make constructions to reflect their own ideas.

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 improving the following:
- the formal opportunities for parents and staff to share records and reports of children's individual progress and development.

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.