



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY300167

DfES Number: 522214

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 09/12/2004
Inspector Name Angela Cole

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Little Clowns Nursery
Setting Address 10 Queens Road
Clevedon
North Somerset
BS21 7TH

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Little Clowns Nursery Ltd 4938748

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Little Clowns Nursery Ltd
Address 10 Queens Road
Clevedon
North Somerset
BS21 7TH

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

Little Clowns Day Nursery is one of two nurseries run by a limited company. It opened in 1990 and operates from two levels of a large Victorian house near the centre of Clevedon, North Somerset. There is access to large and small, secure, outdoor play areas. A baby unit is established in a separate annexe in the grounds with its own safety surfaced, outside area.

The nursery provides full day care and occasional care for siblings, for up to 48 children from families living in the local area. The group is open each weekday for 51 weeks of the year from 08.00 to 17.30, or to 18.00 by special arrangement. Children can attend for up to 10 sessions each week.

There are currently 76 children from 3 months to 8 years of age on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. The group currently supports a number of children with special needs and some who speak English as an additional language

Fourteen staff work in the nursery. Eight of the staff, including the officer in charge, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff has teaching status and one is working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. It is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

How good is the Day Care?

Little Clowns Day Nursery offers satisfactory care for children.

Lead staff are well qualified and experienced, and adults have sufficient qualifications overall. Premises are welcoming with displays of children's work. The baby unit is clean, bright and well maintained. The house and its outside areas are not used to their full potential to provide sufficient space for older children. Its toilets are not clean and two-year-olds' nappies are changed with insufficient regard to

hygiene and privacy. Resources are good quality, but older children have limited choice and storage is not well organised. Documentation is in place but some is not available for inspection.

Clear procedures are followed for sleeping babies. The indoor premises are secure, though adults do not always implement health and safety requirements. Staff are vigilant outdoors. Children are offered a balanced menu, including fruit for snacks and convenience foods, and their preferences are well considered. There are appropriate measures regarding illness, though staff do not check that children wash their hands thoroughly. Appropriate procedures are in place for the protection of children.

Babies have access to a wide range of activities and staff interact with them constantly. Throughout the nursery, a variety of play is carefully planned and children's development is regularly noted. Key staff are highly interested in what children do and say, though not all adults have the same rapport. Children's behaviour varies according to the quality of adult interaction. Individual needs of two-year-olds are not sufficiently met in large groups with older children. Staff give good one-to-one support to children with special needs, working closely with their parents and other agencies.

Staff aim to create positive working relationships with parents. Children are looked after closely according to parents' wishes. Families are given good, written information about the nursery and children's progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

After the last inspection, the setting agreed to improve the management and recording of behaviour, amend the setting's policies and update the systems for registration and administration of medication.

The management of children's behaviour has been partially considered. A system to record any incident of physical restraint is in place and guidelines about behaviour and restraining awareness have been discussed at staff meetings. Some progress has been made in developing staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development. There is scope for further improvement, particularly in connection with the management of groups of children and their opportunities for choice of activity.

The organisation of children's care has improved as the registration system now includes the hours that staff and children attend. A visitors record is maintained.

Documentation to promote children's welfare and care has been revised. Medication sheets now contain space for parents to countersign after medication is administered but staff do not always ensure that prior, signed consent is given. Policies have been updated to be in line with National Standards. The nursery has a policy of no smoking. The child protection policy now includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. A written statement on special needs is available to parents.

What is being done well?

- The persons in charge of the babies and older children are well qualified and have good experience of caring for children.
- The baby unit provides good care for babies to develop in a calm, friendly atmosphere. The daily care of each baby is effectively shared with parents in detailed diaries.
- The indoor premises are kept secure and access to the provision is closely monitored.
- Staff have good regard for the requirements of the code of practice concerning children with special needs.

What needs to be improved?

- the grouping of children and their access to a wide range of appropriate activities
- the safety of the children regarding access to unsafe chemicals, inappropriately small objects, and electrical leads and lighting
- the hygiene practices for the changing of nappies, the cleanliness of toilets and the children's handwashing
- the procedures to gain parents' consent for the administration of medication and their signatures on all accident records.

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

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 must take the following actions by the date shown		
Std	Action	Date
4	Ensure children have access to play areas that are large enough to give space for free movement and sufficient, well spread out activities	16/12/2004
7	Ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding the changing of nappies, the cleanliness of toilets and the children's handwashing.	16/12/2004
14	Ensure that all records relating to day care activities are readily accessible on the premises and available for inspection at all times.	16/12/2004

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection	
Std	Recommendation
6	Make sure that inappropriate small items and chemicals are inaccessible, and electrical appliances do not pose a hazard to children.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Little Clowns Day Nursery provides good quality nursery education overall. Children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals (elgs).

The quality of teaching is generally good. Curriculum planning is detailed in the stepping stones with adaptations for children's different abilities. However, plans are often based on activities rather than on children's learning needs as some staff do not have good understanding of the elgs. It is mainly the key workers who observe the children, keep assessment records up-to-date and support children to progress. Several good teaching methods are used, including questions to challenge able children. However, in large groups the first correct answer may be accepted rather than supporting others to think. Children's learning and behaviour are affected by the lack of freedom to move around the nursery, indoors and outdoors, so there is limited choice of activity and resources. Generally, in small groups or as individuals, children are well managed and supported, including those with special needs or learning English as an additional language.

Leadership and management of staff are generally good. Some staff have been enthused to go on training and responsibilities are sensitively delegated. Many development plans have been worked on, though other aspects to improve are recognised but not implemented. Staff regularly discuss the provision and senior workers role-model good practice where possible.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Families are offered extensive, written information on the nursery and its Foundation Stage. Written reports and regular formal meetings enable parents to be well informed of children's progress. New parents effectively share information about the children. All have access to theme plans so they may continue topics at home and respond to requests, for example, for special clothes. Parents are not actively involved in their children's learning on a day to day basis.

What is being done well?

- Children separate from their main carers with confidence and often form good relationships with adults and other children. They concentrate effectively at the activities they have chosen and are supported to behave well in small groups.
- Children gain good language and communication skills. They speak assertively and enjoy using words to tell their own stories. They use mathematical language confidently in their play and gain good understanding of shape, position and size through practical experiences.
- Staff encourage children's spontaneous interests and are very interested in

what children do and say. They use emphatic praise when children have achieved, for example, to build complicated models.

What needs to be improved?

- the children's involvement and concentration through free choice from a wider range of activities, including access to role-play resources and 'writing' materials
- staff knowledge of the early learning goals so all children are challenged and supported at their level of understanding, for example, to show a more active interest in the world around them
- the opportunities for children to have space to move freely, respond to rhythm and music through movement, create intended movements, and regularly make their own choices from a wider range of large and small physical equipment.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Staff have made generally good progress in implementing the point of consideration in the previous inspection.

They have addressed the weakness in the quality of teaching by reconsidering the recording of children's progress. A detailed system of assessment of progress through the stepping stones has been adopted. Records are regularly up-dated by the key workers and includes helpful, dated samples of children's work. Jottings are generally retained as comments. However, few are included for some children, so certain aspects of learning have insufficient emphasis.

The improvements made have had a positive impact, overall, on children's learning.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children settle confidently with very little support. They are curious but a positive approach to learning is not fostered by regular adult redirection of play. Children feel safe and secure, especially with senior staff. They often care for younger children and play in small groups sharing and taking turns with support. Children are proud of their achievements and concentrate on self-chosen activities. They do not have free access to a wide range of resources so independent learning is limited.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children confidently use language to share their needs and ideas. They learn a range of new words, such as 'ace' and 'ark' and are beginning to use language skilfully to recall and reflect on their activities. Children develop good hand-eye co-ordination. They often say what they have drawn or painted, but do not have free access to a range of 'writing' materials to use for their own purposes. Children are keen to read books, handle them carefully and enjoy listening to and joining in stories.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children often use numbers in play, for example, to count backwards for a 'rocket' launch and talk about birthdays. They show good interest in number problems in routines and enjoy songs such as 'Five Hot Cross Buns'. They recognise figures, including '10' on an advent calendar. However, not all children are supported to solve problems as well as those who answer correctly. Children effectively learn about shape, space and measure, for example, through making models and arranging toys.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have regular opportunities to explore cooking ingredients and objects brought in, but not to gain interest in the world around them. They spontaneously experiment, for example, with pulleys, and are keen to construct their own designs from bricks and recycled materials. Children show effective interest in technology using torches and a listening centre. They often recall meaningful events and are interested in special days, including Christmas, through craft and story.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children are sufficiently aware of their needs for food and toileting, though not of hygiene. Most days, they go outdoors together but have inadequate space to avoid others. Insufficient large and small equipment is set out for the whole group. Children move spontaneously indoors but response to music is limited to a few action songs and an occasional tape. There is little combining and repeating of challenging movements. Good skills are gained using small tools, such as brushes and pencils.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy using their senses and experiment with the sounds of many instruments. They learn a wide range of songs, though do not often respond freely to music through movement. Children effectively explore colour and texture with paint and different coloured glues. They often create in three dimensions, using imagination in painting, drawing, construction and with small toys such as cars. Children explore a wide range of role-play resources though these are only available on request.

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 staff knowledge of the early learning goals so all children are challenged and supported at their own level as they choose from a wider range of appropriate activities
- develop opportunities for children to move freely, respond through movement, create intended movements and make their own choices from a wider range of physical equipment.

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.