



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127091

DfES Number: 521900

INSPECTION DETAILS

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| Inspection Date | 22/03/2004 |
| Inspector Name | Christine Robinson |

SETTING DETAILS

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| Day Care Type | Sessional Day Care |
| Setting Name | Challock Pre-school Playgroup |
| Setting Address | Challock Memorial Hall, Blind Lane, Challock Ashford Kent TN25 4AU |

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

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| Name | Mrs Kathleen Stevens |
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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

Challock Pre-School Playgroup is privately owned and opened in 1995.

It operates from the first floor of a modern village hall in Challock, a small village between the towns of Ashford and Faversham. It serves the local rural community and surrounding villages.

There is one play-room and the hall has its own separate kitchen and cloakroom facilities; there is one further large hall on the ground floor available for physical play. Children are also able to play outside in the adjacent equipped playground and playing field.

There are currently 24 children from 2-4 years on roll. This includes seven funded three year olds and seven funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs; currently all children speak English.

The group opens five days a week during term-time. Sessions are from 09:00-11:30 and on Monday afternoons, the group is also open from 12:30-15:00.

Two staff work with children and hold recognised early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from an early years advisory teacher. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Challock Pre-school Playgroup offers a happy and productive learning environment; the provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals and in social, language, mathematical and creative development, they are making very good progress.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a sound understanding of the stepping stones and provide a good balance of free and structured play. The group is small and as a result, staff know children well and can set activities at an appropriate level. At some points in the session, the two staff both help children on structured tasks such as completing work-sheet booklets. Consequently, opportunities are missed to extend children's learning in areas like the book-corner and the use of programmeable toys.

Plans are detailed but mostly relate to topic-work around colour, shape, number and letter. As a result, assessment is concentrated in these areas and there are gaps in the subsequent planning, especially around knowledge and understanding of the world and physical play. Observations are linked to planning and used to formulate individual learning plans.

Leadership and management is generally good. The owner/manager and her deputy work together as a team and attend training together to enable them to help support children's learning. Liaison with the local school is promoted. Although the manager is conscious of the need to assess children's progress, this has not been monitored sufficiently to ensure assessment across the breadth of the early learning goals.

Partnership with parents is very good. They are given excellent detailed information both about the setting and about their children's progress. They are encouraged to bring in items to support children's learning, such as items for the 'sounds' interest table, and state that they appreciate the calm, welcoming atmosphere of the group.

What is being done well?

- The group provides excellent opportunities for parents to share in their children's progress. They are kept informed of children's daily progress and receive a termly folder of children's work and are able to add their own comments. Apart from the transfer document scheme, parents receive a detailed summary of children's progress including photographs, examples of their work and written observations when they leave.
- The manager/owner and her deputy have a long established partnership and work efficiently together to provide a very well organised nursery environment. They are committed to the improvement of the setting and attend many short courses to extend their own knowledge.

- Children are developing sound number skills through a range of formal and incidental learning opportunities. For example, at snack-time, older children count the number of boys and girls, remembering to count themselves; the more able are then able to calculate how many more girls or boys there are.

What needs to be improved?

- the opportunities for children:
 - (i) to find out more about cultural diversity
 - (ii) to investigate why things happen and how things work
- the organisation of planning to ensure that topic-work activities are integrated through all the six early learning goals
- the deployment of staff to enable children to benefit from staff interaction in everyday play activities
- the monitoring of the provision for nursery education to ensure that a balanced approach is taken to planning and assessment across the breadth of the six early learning
- goals.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last education inspection in 1999, one point for consideration was identified. The point concerned the provision of more books promoting positive images of different cultures, traditions and disabilities. Progress on this issue has been generally good. There is now an appropriate range of books but planning does not show that these books are used to promote ideas of cultural diversity.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are familiar with playgroup routines and co-operate well in small and large groups. They are developing independence and behave well as a result of staff interest and engagement in their learning. Children enjoy good relationships with staff and each other and are encouraged to be polite and considerate.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children listen with interest to stories and can speak fluently and confidently. They are beginning to learn the sounds of letters and the more able children are able to recognise their name and write correctly formed letters. There are good opportunities for children to practise emergent writing skills in the office-corner.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are introduced to the concepts of number, shape, volume and capacity through topic-work, access to puzzles and sand-play. Many children can count confidently to 10 and older children are beginning to recognise numbers. They learn about number through many incidental opportunities at times such as snack-time and when singing counting rhymes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have good opportunities to build three-dimensional models and find out about the uses of everyday technology through using programmeable toys like 'mini-computers'. Children have many opportunities to learn about the natural world; for example, cress was sown at different times and they observed the difference in growth. Children have limited opportunities to learn about cultural diversity and also limited chances to explore and investigate why things happen and how things work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children demonstrate competence in fine motor skills through the use of rolling pins, scissors, brushes and glue spreaders. They negotiate the space well and are able to run and cycle without bumping into each other. Children develop physical skills through regular access to outside play but the lack of planning for physical play means that some receive insufficient challenge in this area.

| CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT | |
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| Judgement: | Very Good |
| A long free-play session gives children good opportunities to develop extended imaginary play situations. They are able to express their feelings through regular access to musical instruments, small world toys, dressing-up and home-corner resources. They explore colour, shape and form through frequent use of messy play materials such as dough, sand, paint and sticking. | |
| 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:
 - (i) to find out more about cultural diversity
 - (ii) to investigate why things happen and how things work
- extend planning to ensure that topic-work activities are integrated through all six early learning goals, particularly planning for gross motor development and aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world, as outlined above
- review the deployment of staff to enable children to benefit from staff interaction in areas like the book-corner and the use of activities like construction and board games
- improve the monitoring of the provision for nursery education to ensure that a balanced approach is taken to planning and assessment across the breadth of 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.