



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 507964

DfES Number: 515498

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 22/03/2004
Inspector Name Anne Munro

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Woodlands Pre-School
Setting Address Netley Marsh Community Hall
Woodlands Road, Netley Marsh
Southampton
Hampshire
SO40 7GL

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name WOODLANDS PRE-SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Address (AS PREVIOUS)
U/A

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

Woodlands Pre-school has been operating since 1982 in the Community Hall in the village of Woodlands. The group uses the large and the small hall as well as kitchen and toilet facilities. The pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and children attend from a wide surrounding area.

The group is registered to provide sessional care for 26 children aged from 2 to under 5 years. There are currently 67 children on roll, including 44 funded 3 year olds and 18 funded 4 year olds. The pre-school currently supports a small number of children with special needs.

Sessions are from 09:30 to 12:00 from Monday to Friday and from 12:30 to 15:00 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday in term time. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are 12 part-time staff working with the children, 6 of them with early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3, and 3 working towards a recognised early years qualification. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from a teacher from the Hampshire 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?

The provision of nursery education at Woodlands Pre-School is acceptable and of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world, their personal, social and emotional and their creative development, but there are significant weaknesses in mathematics and in communication, language and literacy. Children's progress in physical development is very good.

Teaching is generally good. Staff work together well and plan a variety of activities to stimulate children's interest. Some opportunities are missed because plans do not make the intended outcome clear. Staff use appropriate teaching methods, asking questions to develop learning, but do not always provide enough challenge for older children. They are particularly good at engaging children in conversation, developing language skills and confidence. They use praise to promote good behaviour and self-esteem, and liaise with other professionals to ensure that special needs are met. An effective keyworker system ensures that staff have good knowledge of children's abilities. They regularly record children's achievements but not in relation to the early learning goals.

Leadership and management are very good. The management committee is formed of parents with good knowledge of the pre-school. The committee provides good support to the staff and continues to evaluate and develop provision. A formal staff appraisal system is in place and staff are supported in accessing training. The committee organises regular fund raising events which enable them to update and improve resources. The supervisor and deputies ensure that staff work well together as a team and are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are actively involved in the group and receive good information in regular newsletters. Communication is encouraged and parents are confident in discussing children's progress with their keyworkers.

What is being done well?

- Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are welcome in the group. They are able to stay for as long as necessary to settle their children and are encouraged to volunteer for a rota of parent helpers. They accompany children on outings and are kept informed of events and activities in regular newsletters. Good working relationships are developed between staff and parents, based on open communication and sharing of information.
- Opportunities provided for physical development are very good, particularly in developing fine manipulative skills using scissors, pencils and other tools, and in activities such as planting small seeds and using needles and yarn on threading cards. The new outside play area provides good opportunities for children to develop physical control and co-ordination.

- Good provision is made for children with special needs. Staff are enabled to undertake appropriate training and liaise with other professionals such as speech therapists and Portage workers to produce individual learning plans for children with special educational needs. Extra assistants are employed to provide support when needed.
- Parents form an active management committee, providing strong support to the staff, including practical help with activities and in clearing and cleaning the room after sessions. They send out regular newsletters recruiting support for fund-raising events which enable them to improve resources and develop the provision.

What needs to be improved?

- the planning of activities to ensure that the intended learning outcome is clear and staff are aware of the input needed to enable all children to make progress
- the system of recording children's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, so that the next steps for development are identified
- parents' input in the assessment process
- opportunities for children to use counting and simple calculation in daily routines
- opportunities for children to use writing for a purpose and to learn about the links between sounds and letters
- opportunities for children to express their own ideas in creative work.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Several issues were raised at the last inspection and some still need to be addressed.

The pre-school was asked to review plans for physical development to provide "regular and challenging activities". Very good improvement has been made with the provision of a new fenced outside play area with a safety surface. This is used daily for a good variety of activities.

They were also asked to develop mathematical plans to extend the more able child. Appropriate activities are now included in the sessions reserved for the older children, but counting and number work are not sufficiently integrated into every day sessions.

The requirement to "fully explore all aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world" has partly been addressed with a range of interesting topics planned across the year, but children do not use information technology or simple powered equipment.

Similarly, some "opportunities for children to use their own imagination and skills" are provided with drawing materials and small world toys, but children have limited opportunities to express their own ideas.

The requirement for parents' observations to be included in the assessment programme was apparently addressed with a formal system of record keeping which is no longer used. There is still a need for more regular sharing of children's records with parents, although there is regular informal discussion and verbal feedback.

The final issue was that "observation records need dating and records of the actual work children have undertaken need to be kept". Keyworkers now keep dated and annotated samples of children's work and use a checklist system to record children's progress, although this is not organised in line with the early learning goals.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children generally sit quietly to listen and are able to concentrate for long periods. They show confidence in their interaction with other children and adults, and learn to take turns and to share. Staff promote good behaviour and self-esteem with praise and encouragement. Children are developing independence in their personal care and in choosing activities and resources. They talk about their homes, families and important events, but have limited opportunities to learn about other cultures.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories, and join in rhymes with enthusiasm. They learn to recognise their names but do not see many other written words or learn to link sounds with letters. They become confident speakers as staff encourage conversation with individuals and in groups. Children develop good pencil control with various activities and some are able to write their names. They do not have enough opportunity to use writing in daily activities.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children use a variety of resources to learn about shape and size, to sort and to recreate simple patterns. They practise using mathematical language with such activities as sand and playdough and in number rhymes. Older children learn to count to 10 and beyond and to recognise numerals in their "4s Club" sessions, but counting and simple calculation are not included enough in daily activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Staff plan a variety of topics that stimulate children's interest in the world around them. Children learn about their environment and their community from visitors and with walks around the grounds and visits to a neighbouring farm. They plant and watch things grow, and learn to design and build with construction toys. They are becoming aware of time in talking about past experiences and planned events. They do not have access to information technology or use simple powered equipment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children use the new outside play area daily for a variety of activities. They develop spatial awareness in manoeuvring ride-on toys and use small and large equipment to practise balance, control and co-ordination. They show increasing manipulative skills in learning to use a variety of tools and materials such as pencils, scissors, threading activities, playdough, small world and construction toys.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children learn about colour, texture and shape using a variety of techniques and media, but art work tends to be staff directed. They use percussion instruments to learn about sound and rhythm, and join in songs and rhymes with confidence. They use imagination in role play situations and with small world toys, preparing tea in the home corner and playing battles with knights and castles and with pirate ships.

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

- review the system of recording children's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals so that the next steps for development are identified
- review the planning of activities to ensure that the intended learning outcome is clear and staff are aware of the input needed to enable all children to make progress towards the early learning goals
- provide more opportunities for children to use number and simple calculation in daily routines
- provide more opportunities for children to see and use writing in their daily activities.

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.