



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY136664

DfES Number: 540840

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 24/11/2003
Inspector Name Linda Oliver

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Crocus Early Years (Hinxton Hall Nursery)
Setting Address Wellcome Genome Campus
Hinxton
Cams
CB10 1RQ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Crocus Early Years Centre Limited

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Crocus Early Years Centre Limited
Address Newlands
Hempstead
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB10 2NZ

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

The Crocus Early Years Centre was taken over by the current proprietors in 2001. It operates from purpose-built early years premises, with a baby unit based in the East Lodge, situated within the grounds of the Wellcome Genome Campus at Hinxton Hall, Cambridge. There is an enclosed, all-weather outdoor play area. The centre mainly provides care for the children of parents working on the campus, but some children living locally also attend.

There are currently 53 children from 3 months to 5 years on roll. This includes 11 funded 3 year olds and 1 funded 4 year old. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Currently there are no children attending with special needs, but the setting supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The centre opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00 hours.

There are nine staff working full-time, and four staff working part-time with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2, 3 and 4. There are two staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from qualified teachers within the staff team and also from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. (EYDCP)

How good is the Day Care?

The Crocus Early Years Centre provides good quality care for children aged three months to five years.

Staff work well together and are fully involved in planning, evaluating and developing practice. They are committed to ongoing training to update knowledge and skills which they practise in the setting. All aspects of the provision are well organised. Deployment of staff, space and resources are used effectively to ensure children are well cared for. There is a wide range of toys and equipment which are easily accessible to the children and cover all areas of their learning and development. All

relevant paperwork is in place and stored confidentially.

Staff provide children with a very safe and secure environment. They have a good awareness of health and safety issues and carry out regular risk assessments. Staff have good strategies for caring for children who are ill and they promote good hygiene practices. Children's dietary needs are handled sensitively and positively, and they are provided with a very good range of healthy foods. Staff provide good support for children who speak English as an additional language. The children's welfare is paramount.

Staff are fully involved with the manager in planning an exciting range of activities which build on children's natural curiosity. Children are effectively supported in their play and development, and are encouraged to be independent and confident. Consideration of ways that enable children to freely access the outside play area will develop this further. All children are valued and included, and staff ensure that all their needs are met. Staff manage children's behaviour consistently giving them lots of praise and encouragement.

Children and their parents are warmly welcomed at the centre. Daily written and verbal communication, and the readily accessible information which includes all policies and procedures, ensure that parents are kept well informed of their children's care and development.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the providers agreed to ensure that suitable furniture and equipment was in place.

There is now sufficient and suitable furniture, toys and equipment available for the children at the centre. Very good resources have been provided, which are easily accessible and promote learning in all areas.

What is being done well?

- There are very good staffing ratios in place which includes an effective key worker system. This enables a good level of interaction between staff and children and individual children's needs are being met.
- Staff have a good knowledge of the early learning goals and children benefit from a well planned programme of stimulating activities to promote all round development. Planning for the older children relates to the stepping stones, and staff incorporate the four areas of development in the 'Birth to Three Matters' programme of learning for the babies.
- Staff provide an extremely stimulating environment for the children They present wall displays very well with many opportunities for the children to read the labels and signs. There are many resources accessible to the children, including the valuable core activities such as sand, water and role play.

- There is a healthy and nutritious range of foods offered at snack and meal times. Children's dietary needs are catered for very well and all staff are aware of children's allergies. Staff sit with the children at mealtimes, which are relaxed and social occasions, and children are encouraged to serve themselves, share conversations and learn appropriate table manners.
- Staff pay good attention to children who are feeling unwell whilst at the centre. The policy clearly details how staff will act in the best interests of the child, including making them comfortable and contacting the parents to come and collect them.
- Managers have a very good knowledge of the National Standards and they understand how to interpret them in the best interests of the children. All policies and procedures are appropriate to the setting and have a positive impact on the children. They are committed to improvement, and reflect critically on what needs to be improved and systematically plan ways to develop practice.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

The provision for the babies and children under two years is exceptional. Managers and staff have created a very welcoming, homely and comfortable atmosphere. Babies are happy and content and staff develop warm and caring relationships with them. Staff give very good attention to meeting their individual needs for eating, sleeping and exchanging information with their parents. They have introduced a 'new food list' in conjunction with parents to ensure that babies are only given foods that they have tried at home. Staff enjoy their time with the babies; talking and singing to them. They plan activities well to give both babies and toddlers interesting sensory experiences through topics such as textures, senses and sounds.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for the children to more freely access the outside play area throughout the year.

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
3	Make the outside play provision more freely accessible to the children throughout the year.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at the Crocus Early Years Centre is good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, and generally good progress in all other areas.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff plan and deliver a range of stimulating, worthwhile activities covering all areas of learning. Further development of assessment records and linking these to the planning will ensure that more challenging activities in communication, language and literacy and mathematics are provided, and will further enhance children's progress through the stepping stones and levels of achievement within the early learning goals. Staff form good relationships with the children so that they feel secure and confident and eager to learn. Their enthusiasm and good teamwork ensures the smooth running of the setting. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and they respond well. All policies and procedures are in place and staff understand and implement them in their practice.

Leadership and management is generally good. The manager is responsible for the day to day running of the centre, supported in her role by the directors of the company. Staff are actively encouraged to be involved in the planning and delivery of the curriculum. The manager is able to delegate responsibilities to staff so that all are valued for their particular talents and abilities. The setting is committed to providing a high quality provision which is evidenced by the many training programmes attended.

Partnership with parents is very good and parents are well informed about their children's activities and routines. The key worker system works well and parents are encouraged to share regular written and verbal information about their children.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. They form good relationships with staff and other children, and are confident, independent and make active choices about their play. They have good self esteem and their behaviour is very good.
- Staff have good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn through interacting within a stimulating environment and with provision of a variety of activities and experiences. They provide a shared ethos of good early years principles, and their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
- Children begin to understand about the wider world through the celebration of festivals and they gain awareness of cultures and beliefs of others.

- Staff develop warm and friendly relationships with children and their parents so that they have a good understanding of the children's needs. Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported. They are given opportunities to use their home language, communicate and join in with all activities. Staff organise resources that reflect their home country such as nursery rhyme displays, a French café in the role play area, musical instruments, videos and books.
- Children's physical development is very good. They are provided with many opportunities to practice and develop skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement using a good range of tools, resources and equipment.

What needs to be improved?

- the assessment records to enable staff to effectively plan the next steps to help children make progress, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development
- the level of adult direction in some planned activities to give more opportunities for children to further develop their imagination and creativity.

What has improved since the last inspection?

N/A

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident and eager to explore the learning environment, showing willingness to try new activities. They co-operate with one another and with adults and are learning to respect each other by sharing and taking turns with equipment. Children respond positively to staff and their behaviour is very good. Children are encouraged to develop confidence and independence in their everyday routines. They learn about others by celebrating festivals and through visitors from the community.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children talk freely and confidently to staff and each other about their experiences and ideas. Children's reading skills are being encouraged and they enjoy listening to stories. However, staff miss opportunities to link sounds to letters. Children enjoy a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction books which are made easily available to them in the attractive book corner. The writing table offers opportunities for mark making and developing their writing skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children learn how to use numbers in everyday situations. Counting is included on many occasions in practical and meaningful contexts, including number rhymes, snack time and registration. Children are beginning to use comparative and positional language and they explore concepts of full, empty, more and less in practical situations. However, there is less challenge for the older and more able children to develop and extend the use of calculation in their practical, everyday activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy using their senses to explore materials in practical activities and also in topic work. They confidently use a range of materials and tools to cut, join and build and staff support these activities with appropriate vocabulary. Children enjoy discussing their experiences during circle time and are beginning to understand the wider world by sharing videos and books from different countries. Children learn basic skills using the computer with a variety of educational programmes.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children benefit from a variety of physical play both indoors and outside. They are aware of the importance of space for themselves and others and are learning to move with increasing control. Children readily engage in activities requiring hand-eye co-ordination. They use glue and scissors with increasing skill, and tools to cut and shape playdough to develop small muscle control. Children learn about a healthy lifestyle through circle time, meal times and topics.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children draw and paint confidently. They use a variety of materials to explore textures, shape and form. Children enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes, joining in with appropriate actions. Some planned activities are adult led, limiting spontaneous opportunities for children to express their imagination and creativity. Staff provide a good variety of role play situations, supported well with props. Children's work is praised and valued, and displayed attractively around the rooms.

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

- continue to develop assessment records to enable staff to effectively plan the next steps to help children make progress, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development
- ensure that further opportunities are provided for children to develop their imagination and creativity.

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.