



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127728

DfES Number: 513144

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 24/03/2004
Inspector Name Annie Williams

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Treetops Pre-school.
Setting Address Castle Community School
Mill Road
Deal
Kent
CT14 9BD

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Treetops Pre-School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Treetops Pre-School
Address Castle Community School
Hamilton Road
Deal
Kent
CT14 9BP

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

Tree Tops Pre-School opened in 1988 It operates from a separate building on the grounds of Castle Community School in Deal, Kent. The Pre-Pchool has access to one room, toilets, a kitchen and an outside area. The Pre-School serves the local and surrounding areas.

The group is registered to provide eighteen places for children aged between two and five years. There are currently twenty-nine children on roll. This includes seven funded four-year-old children and eight funded three-year-old children.

Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The staff have experience of working with children who have special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five days a week, term time only. Sessions last from 8:30 to 12:15. There is an optional lunch club that ends at 13:15. Parents provide a packed lunch.

There are four staff working with the children, three of whom hold an early years qualification and all attend short courses. The group receives support from a Pre-School Learning Alliance Fieldworker and a teacher from the Early Years Partnership.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Tree-tops Pre-school provides a caring and welcoming environment for children. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching is generally good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the early learning goals and planning is developing to help children make good progress. Staff know children well and are sensitive to their needs helping children to feel valued. They generally praise and encourage children's achievements, consequently children are eager and motivated to learn. The curriculum is generally well balanced, but aspects across the six areas are not systematically covered. The pace of the routine is generally good, but children wait too long at snack time. Questioning techniques are used effectively to help children to think for themselves. A strong emphasis is placed on play, language and meaningful experiences. The system of assessment and record keeping is evolving and provides staff with useful information, but these are not yet consistently used to identify their next steps in learning and to inform the planning. Staff are familiar with the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs and appropriate monitoring systems are in place.

Leadership and management is generally good. Staff are well supported in the care and education that they provide for young children. The supervisor and staff have worked hard to develop a strong team and are committed to providing opportunities for staff development. They meet regularly to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Staff greet parents warmly and welcome them into the group to play alongside their children. The pre-school provides information for parents about the curriculum through displays, newsletters and supporting photographs. They receive opportunities to discuss their child's progress along the stepping-stones but these are not yet formalised.

What is being done well?

- Staff plan and provide an environment that reflects the importance of language through notices, signs and books. Children speak clearly and confidently to their friends and adults.
- Staff place emphasis on developing writing through experiences that are meaningful to children
- Children learn to take turns and share. They are happy, settled, generally well behaved and eager to learn
- Children receive good opportunities and support in role-play, as they express and communicate their ideas

- Children receive lots of opportunities to practise mathematical skills during their play

What needs to be improved?

- information given to parents
- planning and assessment
- snack time and tidy up time

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were two key issues raised at the last inspection. The pre-school has made satisfactory progress overall with the action plan arising from the previous inspection but some issues around planning and assessment remain to be carried forward to the current action plan.

In order to improve the quality and standards of the educational provision, the setting were asked to: Extend the system of written plans to show what children should learn, and make these plans available to parents. The settings system of planning is evolving. The plans are included under the six areas of learning but there are no systems in place to ensure that the learning objective of the planned and provided activity is achieved.

Put into operation the system of record-keeping which the pre-school has devised, or a similar one. This should cover all the components of the areas of learning and can be used regularly both to inform planning and to provide parents with detailed information about children's attainment and progress. The setting are making observations on the children and these provide useful information. The observations are not yet used to inform planning and there are no formal systems in place to share children's progress along the stepping-stones in the six areas of learning.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Many positive relationships are formed. Children learn to take turns and share. They are happy, settled, generally well behaved and eager to learn. Staff present activities attractively and praise children's achievements. Children proudly announce 'I'm clever' when they have completed tasks. Expectations of children's behaviour are sometimes too high and explanations not always clear and consistent. Some opportunities are missed to develop independence for example at snack time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Staff provide an environment that reflects the importance of language. Children receive regular opportunities to recognise their names and many recognise simple words in the environment such as the sign 'open' in the café. They enjoy stories and join in enthusiastically. Children speak clearly and confidently to friends. Writing is developing well through imaginative play activities, such as the 'café' when children explore writing orders and the 'vets' when children record appointments.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children receive opportunities to practise counting during their play for example as they count the petals on the daffodil. They learn about simple addition and subtraction as they sing familiar number rhymes. Staff introduce size through stories such as Goldilocks. Children learn about shape as they explore construction and complete puzzles. They follow directions that involve positional language, such as 'put the teddy on the chair'.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Staff provide activities that encourage children to investigate a variety of materials and substances such as sand and water. There are good opportunities for children to look closely at differences, patterns and change, for example examining raw noodles and comparing texture when cooked. Children explore, investigate and identify features of the local and wider world through outings in the school grounds. There are less opportunities for children to develop skills in ICT.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Fine manipulative skills are developed well as children display very good skills when cutting, painting, drawing and constructing. Opportunities to use large equipment ensure that children move around freely and safely, but these are infrequent. However, children display a good awareness of themselves and others. Children learn about the importance of personal hygiene and healthy eating through discussion and regular hand washing.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children clearly like the opportunities provided in role-play, as they express their ideas. They happily share musical instruments and enjoy opportunities in 'free-play' to explore musical sounds. Children readily explore media and materials. They eagerly play with the art activities staff provide and enjoy exploring painting techniques such as hand printing. They generally receive good opportunities and support to enable them to use their imaginations in art, design and role-play.

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

- re-organise snack time so that children are not waiting too long and use this time to further develop independence
- consider how to give prior warning of 'tidy-up' time to enable children to plan their play
- continue to develop planning to include a broad range of practical activities linked to the stepping-stones within the aspects of the six areas of learning and include details of i) what children are expected to learn; ii) staff deployment; iii) how staff will differentiate to develop individual children's progress based on what the children already know and what they need to learn next.

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.