



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127225

DfES Number: 516666

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 12/02/2004
Inspector Name Jenny Kane

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Harpers Nursery school
Setting Address Harpers Farm, Summerhill
Goudhurst
Cranbrook
Kent
TN17 1JU

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Claire Jane Wickham

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

Harpers Nursery School has been registered since August 1996 and is privately owned and managed.

It operates from a self contained unit of two rooms at the owner's home at Harpers Farm in Summerhill near Goudhurst. There is access to a safe, fully enclosed outside play area. The group serves the local and surrounding area.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 15:30 during term time. Children attend on a sessional or extended day basis.

There are currently 69 children on role aged from two years to five years. This includes 8 funded three-year-olds and 20 funded four-year-olds. The group supports children with special needs and no children speak English as an additional language.

Two full time and four part time staff work with the children. Five have early years childcare qualifications and five hold current first aid certificates.

The group receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). They are also members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA).

How good is the Day Care?

Harpers Farm Nursery School provides good quality care for children.

The owner and her staff have worked together for several years. Team work is very good, staff have a good knowledge of childcare and are well qualified. The prospectus shows clear aims and objectives of the group, however some of the policies need updating. The premises are welcoming and children's work is well displayed. There are good outdoor play facilities which children benefit from using on a daily basis. Children have access to a good range of toys and equipment. They are encouraged to care for the toys and put them away after use.

Safety standards are good both inside and outdoors. Staff pay good attention to hygiene and children are encouraged to have good personal hygiene. Nutritious snacks are provide during the day and children have good table manners. However the children would benefit from being able to pour their own drinks.

Children enjoy a range of well planned, interesting activities which help them to develop. They show good concentration and behaviour is good. Children are well settled and work in small groups with familiar staff which offers good continuity. They have good relationships with staff who are able to meet their individual needs. Children interact, share and play co-operatively with each other.

Relationships with parents is good and they are happy with the care. Staff are friendly and approachable and are available daily to talk to parents about their child's care and progress. Parents have access to their children's developmental records and are encouraged to look at them on a regular basis. New parents are encouraged to visit the group prior to their child starting, they receive a prospectus with relevant information, some of which needs enlarging upon. The owner and the staff work with parents to provide a homely and caring atmosphere for the children.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no actions raised at the last inspection.

What is being done well?

- There are very good opportunities for outdoor play activities. The garden is used on a daily basis and children go for walks around the farm to look at animals and nature.
- Staff work well as a team, sharing tasks and supporting each other.
- All children are respected and treated as individuals. Children with special needs are fully integrated into the nursery.
- Children are kept well occupied during the sessions. Staff make the activities interesting and stimulating and as a consequence the children's behaviour is good.

What needs to be improved?

- the formal staff supervision and appraisal
- the lost child policy
- the complaints policy
- the child protection policy
- the reviewing and updating of written policies.

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
2	Introduce a system of formal staff supervision and appraisal.
2	Update and expand the lost child policy.
12	Update complaints policy to include Ofsted telephone number.
13	Update the child protection policy to include procedure to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff.
14	Review and update policies.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Harpers Nursery School is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a good knowledge of the stepping stones and demonstrate a good understanding of how children learn. Long, medium and short-term planning ensures children are provided with purposeful and challenging activities. A clear system of observation and assessment is used daily to track children's progress. Staff support children well during activities, including those with special needs, and treat all children with equal concern. The children's behaviour is well managed and staff are good role models.

The leadership and management is generally good. The owner is also the manager and takes a very active role in the day to day running of the nursery. She supports her staff well and delegates to her very capable deputy. The staff are well established and work effectively as a team, meeting regularly to plan and monitor the curriculum. There is good commitment to staff development and the introduction of formal staff appraisals would ensure training needs are identified. The manager is very keen to work with parents, listens to their views and comments and has a positive attitude towards making change and improvements.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents receive written information about the 6 areas of learning and the curriculum. The manager and her staff are available to speak to parents on a daily basis, keeping them informed of achievements. However there are no termly consultations where parents can discuss their child's educational progress. There is good sharing of information regarding topics and curriculum with the parents, who are encouraged to continue their child's learning at home.

What is being done well?

- Children are well motivated through a range of practical activities and topics. Staff use thought when planning activities and make the play areas interesting. They support children's individual needs and encourage self-selection and independence
- Staff maintain very good relationships with parents and carers. They are friendly and approachable and keep parents well informed about the curriculum. Parents confidently share information with staff and are involved in their children's learning.
- Children have many opportunities to explore the wider world, celebrate festivals and explore other cultures. Lots of the topic work is displayed and staff are enthusiastic and make the subject interesting.

- The book and computer areas are very well used. There are many opportunities for children to use their imagination through action games, movement sessions and role play.

What needs to be improved?

- the formal system for parents to consult individually regarding their children's educational progress and achievements in the 6 areas of learning
- the opportunities for children to use writing during role play activities.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the group were asked to consider two actions:

- 1) Improve the quality of information given to parents by providing more detail on the content of the curriculum.
- 2) Enhance the programme for mathematics by providing more practical activities and real objects to develop children's understanding of number operations, such as simple addition and subtraction.

The group has taken action on both these issues:

- 1) The prospectus has been updated and now includes details of the curriculum and the 6 areas of learning.
- 2) Additional mathematical equipment has been purchased which is well used during the sessions. There are good visual displays of number around the room.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy, interested in activities and participate well. They have very good relationships with staff, other adults and their peers. Children choose from activities and move around their environment with purpose and confidence. They are independent, taking themselves to the toilet, selecting toys and putting on coats. Children are kept well occupied and therefore behaviour is good. They have many opportunities to explore the wider world, celebrate festivals and explore other cultures.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers and communicate well with adults. They enjoy stories, the book corner is well used, they can retell stories and can talk about their own experiences. Staff encourage children to use books to find out information about topic work. There are good displays of letter and word around the room and areas are well labelled. However more opportunity for writing in role play is needed. Children can identify their own names and have a good knowledge of phonics.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children participate in a good range of counting activities in particular at register, snack and group time. There are opportunities to explore number, shape, size, volume, colour and quantity during many practical activities, topics and role play. They learn how to use maths in everyday situations and there are good visual displays of number around the room. Staff make the activities meaningful and enjoyable.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn about the environment around them, watch the birds, look at the fish and help feed the rabbits in the garden. They have regular access to a computer sharing well and taking turns. Children show a good understanding of their own and other cultures. Visitors are encouraged to share differences and diversity. There are a good selection of resources which reflect equality of opportunity and project work is well displayed.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children use the outdoor play area on a daily basis and go on regular walks around the farm. They show a good awareness as they move around their environment, both inside and out, safely avoiding obstacles and other children. There are many opportunities to climb, ride, balance, throw and catch using a range of large toys and equipment. Children show good control when using a range of small tools, they handle scissors, brushes, tweezers and pencils well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children enjoy a wide range of activities which encourage their creativity. They use their imaginations well and enjoy role play scenarios, sharing and co-operating well. Children take part in regular music and movement sessions where they listen and respond well. They have access to a range of interesting art and craft materials where they can try different techniques and express themselves creatively.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- Develop a formal system for parents to consult individually regarding their children's educational progress and achievements in the 6 areas of learning.
- Increase the opportunities for children to use writing during role play 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.

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.