



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127160

DfES Number: 581763

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 15/03/2004
Inspector Name Virginia Cooper

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name East Farleigh Pre-School
Setting Address Church Hall
Lower Road, East Farleigh
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 0JL

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of East Farleigh Pre-School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name East Farleigh Pre-School
Address Church Hall, Lower Road
East Farleigh
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 0JL

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

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

How effective is the nursery education?

East Farleigh Pre-School provides unacceptable provision and children are making poor progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is poor. Most staff are not familiar with the Foundation Stage and rarely refer to the stepping stones. Activities that are planned for the plus-fours group on Monday afternoons do relate to the six areas of learning, but at all the other sessions it is generally only the art and craft activity that is planned. The peripheral activities rarely support the main learning theme. There are insufficient planned activities for the three year olds. Staff miss opportunities to extend children's learning and fail to record their progress in the free choice activities. The quality of the children's assessment records is variable, there are lengthy gaps between entries and in some areas of learning. Plans do not build upon what the children already know, providing them with appropriate challenges to enhance their learning. Children's individual learning needs have only recently started to be given consideration. The staff are not reacting instinctively to the children's actions. The children's behaviour is generally good but the staff's strategies for managing behaviour are limited, and sometimes a lack of understanding of child development is an issue.

Leadership and management has significant weaknesses. The pre-school is managed by a committee but the supervisor has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the group. The supervisor recognises that help is required for them to deliver the curriculum effectively and to assess the children's progress and use these records to plan appropriate activities.

Partnership with parents has significant weaknesses. Parents are kept well informed about the group and are welcome to visit at any time. However there are no formal systems in place that allow parents to contribute to their children's assessment records after they have started at the group.

What is being done well?

- Children enjoy a range of craft activities that enable them to explore different colours and textures through interesting messy play.
- Staff are encouraged to improve their knowledge by taking qualifications.

What needs to be improved?

- the staff's knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage, the stepping stones and early learning goals
- the planning and teaching of activities and how they are differentiated

ensuring that three year olds have similar learning opportunities as older children

- the appropriate grouping of children taking account of their level of concentration and ability
- the methods used to record children's progress and achievements and how these are used to plan appropriate activities that take account of children's individual learning needs
- the opportunities for parents to contribute to children's assessment records
- the staff deployment and the organisation of the environment and resources
- the range of strategies used by staff to manage children's behaviour
- the methods used to ensure all children are sufficiently challenged.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were two Key Issues identified at the last inspection.

The first was to ensure that staff's knowledge of the 1994 Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Also to include the information in the special needs policy.

This information is now included in the policy but it is only the SENCO who is familiar with the Code of Practice.

The second was to find ways to encourage parents to contribute to assessments by sharing observations of children's learning at home. The staff ask parents to complete information about their child when they start and exchange information with them when they complete the record of transfer for school. This is just before the children are about to leave. Unfortunately there is no formal system in place to collect information for the period whilst children are attending the group.

The progress is limited for this reason and also because at the inspection before the last, the group were asked to ensure that parents understand that their observations of children's learning at home are important for them to contribute to assessment records in particular to help them assess and identify children with special needs.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Poor

Some children happily amuse themselves and are interested in their play, but some are disengaged and observed wandering away from the activities, looking lost. The children relate well to staff in one-to-one situations but group activities are less successfully managed. The children are generally well behaved but challenging behaviour is not always addressed taking full account of the child's stage of development. Children are often aided before they have the opportunity to try independently.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Poor

Children experience difficulty listening and following instructions. They converse with each other and staff alone, but have not learnt how to negotiate and communicate effectively in larger groups. Children take books to staff and they often read to them. The children are not often encouraged to look for familiar words, and most could not find their names. Opportunities to practice emergent writing whilst they play is limited. Three year olds have less opportunities to practice these skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Poor

Children undertake some counting activities and sing number rhymes but many more opportunities to count are missed. Most recognise written numbers and they can relate numbers to objects. Some children can recognise different shapes. Children are not encouraged to make any simple calculations. The assessment records are not effectively used to plan new activities building upon the children's existing knowledge. Some children are insufficiently challenged mathematically.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Poor

The plus fours group have more opportunities to explore and investigate the world about them than the three year olds. Children rarely use technology that is in working order, allowing them to learn how things operate. Children rarely independently design and make. Some interesting projects have been tackled but what the children have learnt is not recorded. Children are beginning to understand about their own and other people's cultures by celebrating a variety of festivals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Poor

Children are provided with lots of opportunities to practice physical skills; balancing and climbing equipment, tunnels, bikes and beanbags, but their achievements are not accurately recorded. They do not however always move safely and with control. Their awareness of others' personal space is limited and staff are sometimes slow to react when problems are erupting because of this. The children use a variety of hand held tools but their progress in these skills is not regularly assessed.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children undertake a range of craft activities planned by the staff; they explore different colours and textures through interesting messy play activities. They enjoy experimenting with paint. Most children recognise the different colours. Children are familiar with songs and rhymes and often use musical instruments. Role-play opportunities are not well developed. The peripheral activities are often creative but rarely support the main learning theme.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is not fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is unacceptable. Children are making poor progress towards the early learning goals.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- improve staff knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage, the stepping stones and early learning goals
- improve staff understanding of how to use this knowledge to plan appropriate activities in all areas of learning taking into account children's individual learning needs
- ensure that staff deployment and the organisation of the environment and resources help all children use their time productively and in particular ensure that the service provided is of equal quality for three and four year olds
- ensure that the children's progress and achievements are consistently recorded and use this information to group children appropriately, and provide activities that build upon children's existing knowledge
- provide opportunities for parents to contribute to children's records
- ensure that staff are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a positive way which promotes their welfare and considers the child's stage of development.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 20 working days showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. A copy of the action plan must be sent to the local education authority. The Department for Education and Skills will write to the provider asking for a copy of the action plan. The Secretary for Education and Skills will then decide whether to withdraw the provider's entitlement to receive funding for nursery education.