



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY231935

DfES Number: 537202

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 16/11/2004
Inspector Name Judith, Mary Butler

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name The BigTop Pre-School
Setting Address Bedgrove Pavilion
Bedgrove Park
Ambleside, Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP21 9TT

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Sylvia Anne Robinson

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

The Big Top Pre-School first opened in 2002. It operates from a community centre in Bedgrove in Aylesbury. A maximum of 32 children aged from 2 to under 5 years may attend at any one time. The pre-school opens 5 days a week from 09.15 until 11.45 and from 13.00 until 15.30 on Tuesdays. A lunchtime club is also available from 11.45 until 12.45 each day. All children share access to an outdoor area.

There are currently 62 children on roll. Of these, 34 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local surrounding area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and a number of children with English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven staff. The manager and four staff hold relevant early years qualifications.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The Big Top Pre-School provides acceptable nursery provision and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching is generally good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this to plan an interesting and stimulating range of activities for the children. All staff are involved with the planning process, with the deputy and manager responsible for putting the final product together. Staff plan activities to meet the needs of the individual children in the small group sessions. Staff miss opportunities to reinforce children's learning through repetition and revisiting activities. Staff undertake regular observations and the manager uses these to update the children's developmental records. Children's progress through the stepping stones is not recorded. Planning documents record the activity, expected learning outcome, resources, staffing and evaluation. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive a good level of support from staff. Staff form good relationships with children; children are well behaved and share the toys and resources.

Leadership and management are generally good. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. An annual appraisal system is in place; staff identify their strengths, weaknesses, and training needs. Staff hold regular meetings to discuss planning, training and individual children's progress. Staff evaluate the planned activities, however, they do not record if the expected learning outcome is met and do not use the evaluation to inform future planning.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents receive good information about the setting through the prospectus, parents' notice boards and monthly newsletters. Parents and staff verbally exchange information at each end of the session. Parents receive regular written reports on their child's progress.

What is being done well?

- Children relate confidently to each other and adults. They are well behaved, co-operate with staff and share the toys and resources. Children are confident in their surroundings and are keen to take part in the planned activities. Many children are able to select the toys and resources they wish to use and are able to work independently at a number of tasks.
- Children show good co-ordination skills and spatial awareness with opportunities to use small and large equipment. They move with confidence around all areas of the pre-school. They have regular opportunities to use a range of small and large equipment. Children are confident in their independence skills and show a good awareness of basic hygiene.

- Parents receive good information about the setting through the prospectus, newsletters and parents' notice board. They are requested to complete an entry profile when their child starts the setting. Parents and staff exchange information at the beginning and end of the day. Formal reports are given to parents and their comments are welcomed.

What needs to be improved?

- children's developmental records, to ensure children's progress through the stepping stones is recorded and children's next steps in learning are identified
- evaluation, to ensure the documentation records if the expected learning outcome has been met and is used to inform future planning
- communication, language and literacy to ensure children are given further opportunities within the daily routines to recognise the sounds that letters make and to make marks
- mathematics, to ensure that children are provided with opportunities to use simple calculation within the daily routines.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children leave their main carer with confidence. They enter the setting and are able to choose the toys and resources they wish to use. Many are able to work independently at a number of tasks. Staff form good relationships with the children. Children are well behaved; they share the toys and resources and show co-operation with their peers in their play. They participate in the range of resources and activities with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Children relate confidently to each other and adults.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children recognise their names when they enter the setting. They enjoy books and stories and many are able to anticipate what happens next in stories. Children handle books with care and many are aware that print carries meaning. They communicate well to each other and adults and show an awareness of the speaker. Staff miss opportunities to reinforce children's knowledge of the sounds letters make and practise their emergent writing within everyday routines.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Many children are able to count up to 10 and some children can count beyond this. Older children are beginning to recognise written numerals from 0 to 9. Staff provide children with opportunities to match patterns and shapes, for example the Knex construction game. Children use mathematical language in their play, for example biggest and longest. Opportunities are missed to reinforce the use of simple calculation through practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children access a good range of activities to learn through first hand experiences and aid them in using their senses, for example the ice. They are keen to talk about events that have happened in their personal lives and are becoming aware of the traditions of other people. Children are competent in their use of the computer. Staff provide children with a good range of construction materials and children are developing their design and making skills through these.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children show good co-ordination and spatial awareness. They move confidently around all areas of the pre-school. Children have opportunities to use a wide variety of large and small equipment to develop their small and gross motor skills. They have access to a good range of tools and are developing their ability to use them safely and with control. They are confident in their independence skills and show an awareness of personal hygiene.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children respond enthusiastically to new experiences and are confident in communicating their thoughts and feelings. Children explore their imaginative play freely through a range of activities including role-play, dressing up and small world toys. There are missed opportunities for children to freely choose art and craft materials. Staff provide children with a variety of activities to explore a range of media such as play dough, sand and 'gloop'.

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

- ensure children's development is recorded through the stepping stones and their next steps for learning are identified
- develop the evaluation process to formally record if the expected learning outcome has been met and use this to inform future planning
- develop the planning to ensure that children are offered opportunities to reinforce their learning through repetition, questioning and re-visiting 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.