



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127517

DfES Number: 543382

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 17/05/2004
Inspector Name Christine Robinson

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Little Oaks Nursery School - Ashford
Setting Address William Harvey Hospital, Kennington Road
Willesborough
Ashford
Kent
TN24 0LZ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Little Oaks Early Years Ltd

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Little Oaks Early Years Ltd
Address Park Farms Road
Folkestone
Kent
CT19 5DN

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

Little Oaks Nursery opened in 2001. The nursery is one of two owned by a limited company. It operates from a modern single-storey building set in the back of the grounds of the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. The nursery welcomes all children but the majority of parents work in the health service. The nursery has a number of play-rooms, including an extended baby-unit and its own kitchen and cloakroom facilities. There is an enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 72 children from 0-11 years on roll. This includes 3 funded 3 year olds and 10 funded 4 year olds. Most children attend on a full-time basis.

The nursery opens five days a week through the year. The nursery is open from 07:00 to 18:00. There is also a breakfast club which opens at 07:00, an after-school club which opens from 15:00-18:00 and a holiday club which opens all day. The nursery is able to pick up children from Willesborough CP School. The group supports children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

Apart from the principals, cook and drivers, there are 14 staff working with the children and the majority have recognised early years qualifications to NVQ 2 or 3. The setting receives occasional support from an early years advisory teacher.

How good is the Day Care?

Little Oaks Nursery provides good quality care for children. Most of the staff are qualified and many are experienced in the care of children of pre-school and school age. Children are able to use a wide range of equipment and resources, including a fully equipped ball-pool. The rooms are arranged to form a welcoming and homely environment and are decorated with examples of children's work and photographs. There is plenty of time and space for children to extend their play and the staff effectively organise a balanced range of activities to promote all areas of children's development. Although children have regular access to the outside play area, it is not well-presented and there is no space suitable for the youngest children.

Paperwork is accessible and well-organised. All the required records and policies are kept but some policies lack detail and are not actively shared with parents.

There is a generally good awareness of safety issues and due attention is paid to the importance of good health and hygiene practice. Staff have a satisfactory awareness of child protection issues. They are aware of the need to include all children and meet any special or additional needs, including any dietary need.

Staff interaction with children is positive and a full range of activities are planned including resources for creative and imaginary play. Staff use strategies to manage children's behaviour that are appropriate to their age and stage and consequently, children behave well.

Staff welcome parents into the group and keep them well-informed about children's daily progress. They are encouraged to be involved in a variety of fund-raising and social events. There is a welcoming display of information and photographs in the cloakroom area about how children learn and develop through play.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- Staff are friendly and enthusiastic and committed to working in partnership with parents. The key-worker scheme ensures that staff know children well. Evidence from questionnaires show that parents believe that the nursery provides a relaxed and caring environment where their children can play and learn.
- The nursery is clean and welcoming. Staff are active in promoting good health and hygiene in the kitchen and cloakroom areas through regular cleaning routines. Most of the staff are trained in first-aid and appropriate procedures are in place to protect children from illness and infection.
- An addition has been recently made to the accommodation for the under twos and the baby-unit now has two main play-rooms apart from a large separate bathroom for toileting and changing and a designated sleeping room. The new play-room allows younger babies and older toddlers to be separated so that staff can best meet their needs. The room is light and airy, fully equipped and furnished with a variety of resources to stimulate babies' senses, such as sculptured, reflective wall tiles.

What needs to be improved?

- the presentation of the outside play-area
- the detail of nursery policies and the arrangements to share them with parents

- the content of the child protection statement.

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
13	Review the statement of child protection arrangements and ensure that it contains the procedures to follow where there are allegations against members of staff.
4	Improve the presentation of the outside play space and ensure there is an area suitable for use by the under twos.
12	Review the content of nursery policies and the way they are shared with parents.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Little Oaks Nursery provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals and in mathematical and social development, they are making very good progress.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff are well-organised and effective use is made of the space and resources to provide a variety of worthwhile learning experiences. There is an appropriate balance of structured and free play and generally teaching methods are flexible and matched to children's needs. However, the use of pre-prepared work-sheets does not build on children's learning effectively, especially with regard to writing skills. Planning is detailed and related to the stepping stones by using topic-webs that correspond to the six areas of learning. However, planning rarely includes physical play activities and does not show how any activities will be adapted for different children. Assessment folders are kept for each child but they are completed sporadically, particularly for three year olds; this means that they cannot be used effectively to inform future planning.

Leadership and management is generally good. The owners are not at the nursery full-time but retain a regular presence in the nursery. There are regular staff meetings and appraisals and there is a positive attitude towards encouraging staff to attend training. Insufficient monitoring of assessment systems and the lack of dedicated time to complete observations and maintain records mean that staff do not extend children's learning as much as they might.

Partnership with parents is generally good. They are kept informed through newsletters, a notice-board and regular informal contact. The nursery takes part in the transfer document scheme and in the past, there have been open evenings. The lack of information about the Foundation Stage means that parents are not fully involved in their children's learning.

What is being done well?

- Staff give children good support in developing mathematical concepts and recently, this has been done particularly well with topic-work on shapes. Children can match shapes when playing with puzzles, a wide range of games that promote comparing, ordering and sequencing, and when involved in craft-work such as shape printing and painting on folded paper to make symmetrical patterns. The oldest age group's learning has been supported by an interest table which consisted of labelled packaging to introduce children to the idea of three-dimensional shapes.
- Children have good opportunities to talk to staff in small groups and know that their contributions and ideas are valued. Staff are calm and consistent in their approach to children and remind them of simple rules. Relationships in the nursery are warm, friendly and involved. Children co-operate well

together and enjoy each others' company.

- Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning when they first start at the nursery by completing a 'getting to know you' form and 'I can do ' sheets. These forms help staff build an initial profile of each child so that they can assess their learning needs.

What needs to be improved?

- the use of work-sheets with regard to the teaching of writing skills
- the breadth of curriculum planning and its links to assessment
- the monitoring of the effectiveness of the nursery education
- the information available to parents about the detail of the Foundation Stage.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children generally concentrate well and work purposefully to complete tasks such as painting salt dough 'snails' they had made. Children enjoy good relationships with staff and form close bonds in key worker groups. Children's confidence develops as staff listen to children and display their work. Their independence is increasing as they choose resources, pour their own drinks and put on their own coats. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and children respond well to this.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy stories and learn to speak to staff and each other with confidence and fluency. Children are beginning to recognise their own names and learn about the sounds of letters through the 'letter of the week' and Letterland stories and cards. Evidence from children's work-sheets and folders indicate that some children are being encouraged to attempt formal writing before they are ready to do so.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn about number, shape, size and pattern through activities such as puzzles, cooking, sand and painting and through more formal teaching methods. Most children can count to 10 and are beginning to recognise numbers. The more able children develop understanding about the principles of addition and subtraction through activities like counting songs.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children learn to assemble and join materials by experimenting with collage and scrap materials and are regularly able to use a computer. They are learning about the wider and natural world through parental involvement and a range of topic-work. For example, during a project, children painted weather maps, made a group chart and watched a TV weather forecast. Children lack some opportunities to extend their learning further; for example, the possibilities of the garden are not fully exploited.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy regular outside play and develop skills like throwing, jumping and balancing through the use of a wide range of equipment, including a fully equipped ball-pool. They demonstrate competence in fine motor skills when they engage in activities like threading pasta and using scissors. Gaps in the planning for developing children's large muscle groups mean that some children are not fully extended in their learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children enjoy a good range of cooking and creative activities. They are able to express their feelings through singing familiar songs, listening to stories and playing in the role-play areas. They are able to explore colour, texture and shape through access to a varied range of messy play activities and collage materials.

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

- review the use of work-sheets to ensure that, if used, they reinforce children's skills appropriately, especially with regard to the teaching of writing
- ensure that planning systems:
 - (i) include plans for physical play activities
 - (ii) show how activities will be adapted or extended
 - (iii) are linked to assessment
- monitor the effectiveness of systems to enable assessment records to be maintained regularly and used to inform planning
- extend the written information for parents on the detail of the Foundation Stage.

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.