



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 203765

DfES Number: 584476

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 05/08/2004
Inspector Name Susan Elizabeth Warren

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Out of School Day Care, Full Day Care
Setting Name Chelmsford YMCA Day Nursery Busy Feet & Cosy Toes
Setting Address Victoria Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1NZ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Chelmsford YMCA 3171206 1054070

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Chelmsford YMCA
Address Victoria Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1NZ

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

Chelmsford YMCA Day Nursery (Busy Feet and Cosy Toes) opened in 1993. It operates from three rooms within the YMCA building in Chelmsford, Essex. The nursery serves the local area and the wider community.

There are currently 62 children on roll including 10 funded three year olds and 9 funded four year olds. Children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are supported.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Opening hours are from 07:30 until 18:00.

Five staff work with the funded children. Over half have early years qualifications to level 2 or 3. Two members of staff are currently undertaking training.

The nursery receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA) and is a member of Essex Day Nurseries association (EDNA).

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Busy Feet and Cosy Toes offers acceptable provision for the children but has significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching and in most areas of learning.

The quality of teaching has significant weaknesses. Not all staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage, including how children learn. Planning is ineffective in providing children with a full range of worthwhile activities, suited to individual stages of development. Daily plans lack clear learning intentions. Available equipment is not fully used to extend children's learning, e.g. in role play, ICT, physical development and literacy.

Staff spend insufficient time engaging directly with children; they are often involved in recording lengthy observations of questionable value, or merely watch the children with little attempt to stimulate or engage them in meaningful play, such as during the period between lunch and afternoon activities.

The record system is unmanageable, and does not form a clear picture of children's progress through the stepping stones.

Management of children's behaviour is not consistent and is frequently ineffective. Some staff call out across the room rather than address children directly at their level. Children become bored or restless whilst waiting for staff to be ready; on these occasions behaviour deteriorates.

Leadership and management is generally good. Recent restructuring has resulted in a new team with a clearer view of how to operate the nursery. A well thought out action plan resulted from the last inspection and many positive changes were introduced. Some of these have remained, but many have been lost so that practice has not improved overall. Monitoring of the quality of care and education is haphazard.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Staff are available to speak to parents each day. A monthly newsletter keeps them informed.

What is being done well?

- The environment is bright and colourful, decorated with murals, posters and pictures. Clear labelling around the room helps children identify words. Displays of children's work help to create a vibrant, visually stimulating setting.
- Children learn to count and recognise numerals and basic shapes through displays and planned activities.

What needs to be improved?

- planning/timetabling/use of time and resources
- assessment and record keeping
- choice of activities for children.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Improvement since the last inspection is limited.

There were four key issues for action:

Children now have some opportunities to use number in role play situations, for example when using the home corner as a bus. Few opportunities for practical problem solving through day to day activities are provided.

Equipment used at each session is listed to ensure a varied range is offered. Staff rely heavily on this and do not extend opportunities by the provision of basic, core activities to support children's learning, for example by having props and costumes to support the role play, a choice of messy play and sand or water at all times. The computer is not fully used and resources in the mark making area are poor and uninspiring, with blunt pencils and used paper. Physical play planning lacks challenge and is used to work off excess energy rather than as a learning experience. The routine of clearing up each hour and changing resources wastes productive time and hinders the potential of free flow play for children.

Opportunities for writing within the role play area are included. Children have clipboards and pencils. The self registration system works well. Labelling around the room is clear and helps children become aware of the uses of print. However the designated writing area is under resourced and does not promote development as intended due to lack of attention to the equipment and supplies of paper.

The morning circle time has been reorganised with children appropriately grouped by age. staff are able to keep children's attention and pitch discussions at the level best suited to the stages of development of the children. The circle times are lively and interactive with children telling their news and talking about the weather. A daily focus on either numbers or letters, shapes etc is built into the routine. Staff are enthusiastic about this aspect of the day and it has been successful in providing a worthwhile activity for children.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children persevere with self chosen tasks, such as matching the number puppies. They develop self esteem by celebrating birthdays and other events such as mother's day. Children ask for help when needed and most are co-operative at tidy up time. Some poor behaviour develops whilst children are unoccupied i.e. before lunch. Children rarely ask for equipment or activities. Some world festivals are identified in the long term plan but there is no structured programme to celebrate these regularly.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children are confident speakers and can talk about what they are doing. Staff use open ended questions to encourage children to think. Vocabulary is introduced via the topics e.g. transport words. Children recite the alphabet and say the letter sounds. The book corner is under used and has a limited choice of books available. Children learn to write their names by tracing or going over dots. The writing area contains a limited selection of mark-making resources, some in poor condition.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use numbers as they play and work. They count up and down when singing number songs. They begin to understand simple calculation as they play games involving 'one more' or 'one less' at circle time and during role play on the bus. Textured shapes at low level encourage shape recognition. Appealing maths equipment promotes sequencing and colour/size matching. Children use mathematical ideas during cooking activities and when playing with sand and dough.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children explore items from nature, sometimes collected on walks. They study development of tadpoles. Few 'discovery' items are offered and no opportunities to record their findings. Junk modelling is offered but limited by a poor range of equipment to support the activity and too little adult support or interest. The computer is under used. Visitors provide information about the wider world and visits to places of interest help develop ideas about the environment in which they live.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Large physical activities do not challenge or extend children. A climbing frame is available but under used. Children can find a chair or a space on the floor. Basic hygiene routines such as handwashing are followed and children have access to drinks during the day. Small equipment such as balls and bean bags are used on a rotating basis. Tools in use include scissors and rollers and cutters for playdough as well as tools used in cooking for mixing etc.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Opportunities for expressing ideas and feelings through art and craft activities are limited. Core activities such as free painting are not widely available. Children enjoy interactive songs and occasionally use instruments to accompany their singing. The role play area is themed according to the topic but too few supporting props are included for example clothes, bags , dolls etc to stimulate imaginative play. Small world play is offered but staff do not interact effectively to extend the play.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- make better use of resources by having a greater range of toys and activities available to children throughout the day. Ensure that a range of core activities is widely available alongside the listed choice of equipment for the day. Ensure that planning gives attention to all aspects of each area of learning. Encourage children to have an active role in selecting and suggesting activities and equipment on a daily basis
- implement a more manageable system for observing and recording children's progress, based clearly on the stepping stones
- review the daily timetable to maximise children's productive time. Increase staff's direct involvement with children and have clear learning intentions for activities, and equipment in use, to focus staff interactions. Review procedures so that time spent 'waiting' whilst staff prepare the room is minimised; ensure that children always have a wide choice of worthwhile activities to choose from. Consider children's different stages of development when planning 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.