



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 402244

DfES Number: 519671

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 17/11/2004
Inspector Name Julie Ann Birkett

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Little Chestnuts Pre School
Setting Address Village Hall
Church Road, Toppesfield
Halstead
Essex

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Little Chestnuts Pre-School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Little Chestnuts Pre-School
Address Village Hall
Church Road, Toppesfield
halstead
Essex
CO9 4PT

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 Chestnuts Pre School opened in 1974 and operates from two rooms within the village hall. It is situated in the centre of Toppesfield village in a rural location. A maximum of 25 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 13:00 for 39 weeks of the year. All children share access to two secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 22 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these 16 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a small number of children who have special needs.

The pre-school employs three staff. Two of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

How good is the Day Care?

Little Chestnuts Pre-School provides satisfactory care for children.

The manager has many years experience and is a role model for other staff. Her level three qualification was achieved before 1996 and therefore it needs to be assessed against the current criteria for Level 3. The small team of staff work well together. They use screens to display pictures and posters and to designate areas for play. Space is used well and the children benefit from the separate messy play room. Organisation of snack time however, results in children sitting for some length of time and having to manage drinks and food on their laps. This does not meet their individual needs very effectively. Equipment is of good quality and set up attractively, however planning records show that rotation and presentation of resources can be repetitive.

Policies and procedures are well written and available for parents. Appropriate systems and records are in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children. Documentation is generally in order, however staff do not record children's

attendance until register time.

Staff are warm and welcoming and the children settle quickly and are happy. Staff plan and provide a range of activities. Children enjoy the activities but have limited access to any additional equipment to give them further choice and materials to develop their own play and learning. Staff get to know the children well. They are interested in what the children say and do and as a consequence children are confident. The children build good relationships with staff and each other and all work together well. Children respond positively to the calm staff role models and environment and their behaviour is very good.

The partnership with parents works well. Parents are provided with information about the group and are regularly updated through newsletters and the notice board. There is an active parents' rota. Daily communication between staff and parents is friendly.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the pre-school agreed to introduce a record for any incidents and to update the child protection and complaint policies and procedures. A record book is now available so that any incidents can be recorded and shared with parents. The policies and procedures have been updated and are now in line with the national standard requirements.

What is being done well?

- Staff are warm and caring and new children settle very quickly. Staff talk constantly to the children but also give time to listen to the children's ideas and comments. Children are secure, settled and confident.
- The parent helper rota works well. Parents are able to come into the group to help and support the staff and children. This enables them to find out first hand how their children are progressing and how they are learning through their play.
- Policies and procedures are comprehensive and are clearly written. These provide good guidelines for care practice within the setting and are readily available for staff and parents.

What needs to be improved?

- assessment of the manager's qualification
- recording of children's attendance
- organisation of the snack time
- rotation and presentation of equipment and play resources
- provision of further accessible equipment and resources that children can access themselves.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

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
1	Devise an action plan to show how the manager's level three qualification, achieved before 1996, will be assessed against the current level three qualification criteria.
2	Review the organisation of snack time so that children can eat more comfortably and social and independence skills are further encouraged.
5	Review the provision of equipment and resources so that children have opportunities to access further equipment by themselves to support their own independent play and learning.
2	Ensure that children's attendance is recorded in the register as soon as they arrive at pre-school.
5	Review the rotation and presentation of equipment, toys and materials so that children have a wider and varied range of experiences to ensure that they remain motivated and challenged.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for pre-school education at Little Chestnuts Pre-school is good. Children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a developing understanding of the Foundation Stage. They plan and provide a range of activities and opportunities for the children. They establish how children can make progress along the stepping stones of learning through the basic everyday activities. However, it is not always evident what the learning intentions of other activities are, how these will be achieved and how individual children's learning will be supported or extended. Staff make observations of the children and record their progress. They get to know the children well and have an understanding of how to support or extend individual children.

Staff provide a comfortable learning environment. They are very involved with the children and guide their learning throughout the sessions. They encourage children to think and suggest ideas. Children are able to revisit and consolidate their skills in the activities provided and are secure and settled. Staff and children develop warm and friendly relationships. Children's behaviour is very good in response to the caring and consistent management by staff.

Leadership and management is generally good. Areas for improvement have been identified by the committee and the team of staff and they are beginning to implement changes to the current systems and practice. Management and staff are a cohesive team and work effectively together complementing each other's strengths.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents have access to information about how the children learn within the setting through pre-entry visits, newsletters and displays. Parents share information about their children informally when they start at the playschool. Children's development records are made available to parents on request.

What is being done well?

- Staff provide an interesting and comfortable book corner which stimulates children's interest in books. Children access this quiet area to look at books for enjoyment and learn that books can be used to locate information.
- Staff have worked hard at developing their skills in presenting singing and music sessions. These sessions are lively and interactive and enjoyed by children and staff.
- Staff have the skills and knowledge to know when to give children the time

and space to develop their own imaginative play without adult direction. Children's role play reflects their own experiences and the stories they know but also their creativity when devising their own imaginative stories.

- Staff provide the resources for children to write for a purpose in the role-play areas. This gives children the opportunity to practice their emergent writing skills in a meaningful way.

What needs to be improved?

- curriculum planning
- parental involvement.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There are some significant weaknesses in the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan drawn up to address the three key issues identified at the previous education inspection. Some improvements have been made to the educational programme.

Staff do use some everyday activities to help children develop their mathematical understanding of simple addition and subtraction and practical problem solving. Children sing number songs, talk about one more and less and decide if they have enough. Staff do use some opportunities to encourage these skills, for example at register time to talk about the next number being one more etc.

To address the second issue staff have introduced a new system to record children's progress which is linked to the stepping stones and ultimately towards the early learning goals. While this is working well, as yet the staff do not share the records with parents which fails to address the second part of this key issue to involve parents knowledge of their child's learning at home.

The third key issue was to ensure that plans show how activities can be adapted to provide an increase in learning for the four year olds and provide coverage of all aspects of the early learning goals. The staff have tried different systems for planning the curriculum to find a manageable one that works well for them. Unfortunately the current system still does not show how activities can be adapted to challenge the more able children or how coverage of all aspects of the early learning goals is ensured.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are happy and settled and their behaviour is very good. They show good independence skills as they manage their coats. They concentrate well on things that interest them and show a sense of pride when they finish a task. Children talk confidently about different parts of their lives. They share and take turns and work happily together. They are aware of their own needs and feelings and show sensitivity towards others. Children learn about the wider world through different activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers and express their ideas as they play. They talk about past, present and future events in their own lives. They are introduced to new vocabulary through everyday conversations or topic work. They listen well and respond to songs and stories with enjoyment. They choose books from the book corner. They practice their emergent writing when writing menus in the home corner. Children learn about linking sounds to the written letter.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children count the number of jumps or how many bricks in a tower. They learn to recognise and name numerals as they use puzzles and matching number games. They explore colour and shape as they match, sort and thread beads. They discuss size, weight and volume as they compare buckets of sand, use play dough and discuss their own heights. Children begin to understand simple addition and subtraction when they sing number rhymes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children find out about living things through topic work and everyday opportunities. They talk about changes when they look at the weather and growing up. They use nuts and bolts, magnets and magnifying glasses and learn about what they are and how they work. They build during craft activities and with construction kits. Children use tools well and have access to very simple technology equipment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children notice the effects of exercise on their bodies when they are hot after running around outside. They learn about healthy eating through topics and everyday, practical experiences. They develop a sense of space when choosing somewhere to sit at story time and move with awareness of others when riding bikes outside. They develop very good hand eye coordination when using a wide range of tools and equipment such as rollers and cutters, scissors and pencils.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children use their senses when food tasting or listening to hidden musical instruments. They use their imagination in different role-play situations such as a pirate ship or restaurant. Children explore a range of materials to paint, draw and make models and collages. They join in with singing a range of songs and actions rhymes and also use instruments to experiment with sounds. They have regular planned music and movement sessions and enjoy acting out familiar stories.

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

- develop the planning of the curriculum to show how and what children are expected to learn from activities across the six areas of learning and how individual children will be supported or extended in the activities to ensure that they build on previous learning, this is particularly relevant to providing more able children with sufficient challenge
- provide opportunities for parents to share children's progress records so that appropriate targets are set for children and that both staff and parents know about them and can work together to teach and support their children.

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.