



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY301868

DfES Number: 546292

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 28/01/2005
Inspector Name Maura Pigram

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Skylarks Day Care
Setting Address Holcroft Road
Harpenden
Hertfordshire
AL5 5BQ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Skylarks Day Care Limited 5198664

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Skylarks Day Care Limited
Address Holcroft Road
Harpenden
Hertfordshire
AL5 5BQ

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

Skylarks Daycare operates on Batford Nursery premises and opened in 2003. It operates from a classroom adjacent to Batford Nursery and serves the local area of Harpenden. There are currently seventy eight children from 3 to 5 years on roll. Some children who attend Skylarks also attend Batford Nursery. There are currently no funded children attending. The group supports children with special needs and would support children who spoke English as an additional language.

Skylarks is open from 08:00 to 18:00 providing both breakfast and tea for some children. It is open Monday to Friday for fifty weeks of the year. On the day of inspection there were 13 children present.

Nine part-time staff work with the children. Most of the staff have early years qualifications and one member is currently undertaking relevant training. Skylarks receives support from Batford Nursery.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Skylarks Day Care is of good quality overall.

It enables the children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy as well as physical development. Generally good progress is made in the other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff are beginning to gain some knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are developing their planning. Children are confident and secure in the setting. Most are achieving their potential as young learners as the environment and activities are child centred. The staff have excellent relationships with the children and take positive steps to assist their progress, although there are few opportunities for calculating and information technology. Staff provide support and guidance throughout the children's play at appropriate times and they achieve high standards of behaviour. Children have plentiful opportunities for free play including imaginative play which is a particular strength of the setting. They are able to choose between the outdoor and indoor environment during free play periods. During this time they have access to the well resourced Batford Nursery which is held on the same premises.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is very good. The manager is committed to training and ensures the team undertake relevant training regularly. She has worked very closely with her team including administration staff to ensure a smooth transition to their new base room. A buddy system has been created between the nursery staff and Skylarks staff to ensure continuity with the children's progress.

Partnership with parents is generally good. They are given a welcome pack and there is a notice board with relevant information. The manager is intending to review the information given to parents to include details of the Foundation Stage and forthcoming events.

What is being done well?

- The environment is child centred with the children leading their play and investigation. The staff provide many opportunities for the children to develop their imaginative play both indoors and outdoors. An example of this is the children building familiar items such as a train from crates and plastic barrels. The staff skilfully intervene when invited by the children or when it is appropriate to do so. They ask questions to make the children think and they listen to the children and their opinions are valued.
- Children's physical skills are effectively promoted through a range of indoor and outdoor activities. The large outdoor area provides a wealth of

opportunities for the children to explore and investigate. Children are able to choose between playing on the various wooden structures including a boat to playing in the large sand pit. During free play the children can choose between indoor or outdoor play. The staff are also intending to have group time in this

- stimulating environment.
- The children managed the recent transition to Skylarks new base room with ease and confidence. They were skilfully prepared for the change to their routine with short visits incorporated into their established routine. Children were effectively supported and readily continued their play and learning during these visits.

What needs to be improved?

- staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals
- planning, in order to show the areas of learning and the children's learning intentions.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This is the first educational inspection for the provision.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children are very confident and mainly take the lead in activities. They display high levels of involvement in their chosen activities and adults intervene at appropriate times. They choose between activities and resources both indoors and outdoors. They have very good relationships with each other and the adults. Children's feelings are acknowledged and the staff are sensitive to their needs. They are encouraged to be independent and they behave well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are given ample opportunity to become aware of letters and sounds. The children are attentive listeners and confident to initiate conversations. They enjoy listening to stories and respond with interest and enthusiasm. They handle books with ease and confidence. Many opportunities are given for the children to practise their writing skills such as in the home area and in the nursery writing area. Many children can hold pens and pencils effectively and some form recognisable letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children count readily in their play and with adult direction. They do this in activities such as hide and seek and counting each other prior to going outside. There are many table top games used in adult led play to enable children to develop an awareness of numbers and shapes. There are missed opportunities throughout the routine for the children to develop an interest in number problems, such as, how many cups are needed during snack time.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's interest and knowledge of items which are familiar to them are fostered. Themes, such as, "Myself" lead to activities enabling the children to learn about different places people live and the local environment. They recently made houses from cardboard boxes and compared this to other peoples homes. They also enjoyed joining in activities related to Chinese New Year such as home play and making dragons and kites. There are limited opportunities to develop an interest in technology.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have some free access to the well resourced outside area. They can explore, run, climb and develop balancing skills along the wooden play apparatus. Bikes and cars are available for them to ride. Crates and large plastic barrels are used by the children to create trains and ships in which the children delight in climbing and jumping off. Adults are on hand to offer support and guidance in developing new skills. Children are given ample opportunities to handle and control small objects.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children participate enthusiastically and co-operatively in their imaginative play. They are engaged in imaginative play both indoors and outdoors and this is lead by the children. Adults intervene at appropriate times extending the children's learning and ideas. Craft activities and cooking such as making biscuits are carried out on a regular basis. There are some opportunities for the children to use musical instruments and sing songs. Staff are intending to develop the use of music.

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 staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage
- develop short term plans to show learning intentions based on the stepping stones and show how the activities can be adapted to suit children's individual needs.

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.