



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 146799

DfES Number: 546166

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 27/04/2004
Inspector Name Margaret Coyne

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Merry Go Round Under Fives
Setting Address Hartsfield JMI School
Clothall Road
BALDOCK
Hertfordshire
SG7 6PB

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Merry Go Round Under Fives 1010031

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Merry Go Round Under Fives
Address Hartsfield JMI School
Clothall Road
Baldock
Hertfordshire
SG7 6PB

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

Merry Go Round Under Fives opened in approximately 1989. The group operates from one room in a mobile classroom situated in the grounds of Hartsfield JMI School. The playgroup operates independently of the school. They have access to one room, toilets and two enclosed outdoor areas. The group serves the local community and surrounding areas.

There are currently 70 children from 2.6 years to 5 years on roll. This includes 4 funded three year olds. No funded four year olds are attending at present. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports a number of children with special needs and has systems in place to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The group is open five days a week term time only. The morning session operates from 9.00 until 11.45 and the afternoon session operates from 12.45 until 15.30. With the exception of Friday afternoon when there is no session available.

There are nine members of staff working directly with the children, all of whom are part time. There are also two regular volunteers. Over half the staff have an early years qualification to NVQ level two and NNEB. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The school receives support from an early years teacher and a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Merry Go Round Under Fives provides good quality care for children. The premises are well managed with a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

The operational plan covers most areas of the day-to-day running of the pre-school. Most records and documentation are in place for the safe and efficient management of the pre-school and these are held in a confidential manner. However care must be

taken to ensure information about children's diets is kept confidential. Children are grouped well with good staff support and a variety of resources. The manager is committed to extending her training and knowledge and also that of her staff through regular meetings, training and appraisals. Staff show a high level of awareness of risks to children's safety and suitable precautions are taken to ensure risks are kept to a minimum. However care must be taken to ensure good hygiene practises are in place with regard to hand washing and with any children with allergies. Annual risk assessments are carried out with daily safety checks. Staff and children take part in regular fire drills. The pre-school has a dedicated committee who are actively involved with the group.

Space is used effectively. The room is separated into different areas of play and learning. Activities are purposeful, stimulating and interesting which all children enjoy. Resources are well presented to encourage children to play. Staff are fully involved with the children, support their play and build warm and trusting relationships. Staff encourage and praise the children. There are good systems in place to assess and monitor any child with special needs. Staff implement the behaviour management policy consistently, children are aware of the boundaries and are well behaved.

The group has established effective relationships with parents. Information is readily available, appropriate written consents are obtained and staff are friendly and approachable to share information about their child's day.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to develop an operational plan, to conduct a risk assessment on the premises, to ensure at least one member of staff with current first aid training is on the premises at all times, to produce a no smoking policy, to ensure children have access to drinking water, to make a complaint procedure available to parents and to develop the staff's knowledge of child protection procedures. A suitable operational plan has been developed and implemented for the daily operation of the group. A risk assessment is conducted on a regular basis and with a daily check list. Seven members of staff now hold a current first aid certificate. A no smoking policy is included in the health and safety policy. Children have access to fresh drinking water throughout the session. A written complaints procedure is in place and available to parents in the groups prospectus. All staff have read updated literature concerning child protection and three members of staff have attended the child protection training.

What is being done well?

- The staff's relationship with the children is excellent. The pre-school provides a good range of toys and resources that meet each child's individual needs and promotes their self-esteem. Children are happy and confident and the staff present themselves as positive role models. The children are learning to respect and value those around them and their environment. Children behave well and respond positively to direction from staff.

- The pre-school make very good use of their premises. It is used to its full potential and the children are secure in their surroundings. Excellent use is made of the outside area with a wealth of interest both natural and man-made.
- The presentation of toys and activities encourage the children to take part and show respect for the equipment. Dressing up clothes hang on a rack that is easily accessible and attractive to the children. All activities are available for every child to take part and are age appropriate for individual stages of development. Resources are available to reflect positive images of culture, gender, and disability that allow the children to extend their learning outside their day-to-day experiences.
- Staff are fully involved with the children and are attentive to their needs. Activities are well supported by staff who create a good balance between adult and child led play. Staff interact well with the children and have developed trusting relationships between them. This impacts on the children's security and confidence in the setting.

What needs to be improved?

- recording - confidentiality, and arrival and departure times of children and adults.
- hygiene practise with regard to hand washing
- safety with regard to children with allergies and their access to food they are allergic to.

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
7	Ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing.

8	Ensure children with allergies do not have access to food they are allergic to.
14	Ensure confidentiality is maintained when recording children's details. This refers to children's dietary needs and allergies, and recording any concerns about a child. Devise and implement a system to record the times of arrival and departure of children and adults.

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 Merry Go Round Under Fives is good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development and physical development and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff plan a variety of practical activities and have an understanding of what the children can learn. However planning should be reviewed to ensure all areas of children's development is fully met and to include aims and objectives, resources and an evaluation of the activities. Children's assessments take account of the stepping-stones and staff use these for future planning. Resources are well organised to increase children's independence. Staff develop children's language and listening skills well, they use open-ended questions to encourage children to join in conversations and give children time to interact and converse with each other. More opportunities could be provided for children to extend their learning in some areas. Good systems are in place to support children with special educational needs. A wide range of purposeful activities and opportunities are provided to encourage children to explore and express themselves through play. However this could be further extended in the role play area. Children behave well and respond to direction from staff.

Leadership and management is generally good. The nursery benefits from a dedicated manager who work closely with a committed staff team and committee. They have a consistent approach to all aspects of their work. The manager involves staff in providing an effective educational program.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents have opportunity to talk informally with staff. However they have limited opportunity for formal meetings to discuss their child's progress and to access the activity plans to help extend their child's learning at home.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is given high priority, which enables the children to feel settled, happy and confident in the group. They have developed a good understanding of right and wrong, are forming attachments, play cooperatively and share resources well. Children's concentration is developing as they persist at self selected activities that hold their interest.
- Children are confident speakers and listeners, they use language to express themselves and interact with other children and adults. Staff foster children's language skills well by introducing new vocabulary through topics and activities.

- Staff create a well planned, stimulating environment where children are able to learn and develop through a range of practical play activities both structured and child led. They make full use of the indoor and outdoor areas for physical activities and to experiment with growing seeds and plants.
- Staff use resources in an imaginative way to provide interesting and stimulating learning experiences for the children, for example rice and lentils using a range of small and large pots and pouring tools. Children learn to use language to describe and communicate what they are doing and staff encourage them to think for themselves and experiment using the tools on offer.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to link sounds to letters and use rhyme and rhythm to reinforce sound and to use counting in everyday play situations
- the range of role play experiences for children to express themselves through familiar situations.
- planning to include time for children to use the computer, enjoy trips into their local environment, use programmable toys to discover how things work and time to enjoy and experiment with musical instruments. Plans should also incorporate aims and objectives, resources and evaluation of activities
- opportunities for parents to gain information about their child's progress and achievements and to access activity plans to aid them in extending learning at home.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have developed good relationships with each other and adults in the group. Their concentration levels are developing as they persist at activities i.e. when fishing in the water play area. Behaviour is very good and children are aware of what is expected of them. Children are confident, happy and relaxed, they have developed good independence skills as they select from the range of activities. Children are co-operative with each other and play well in small groups learning to share.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are gaining confidence when speaking, they enjoy stories in groups and one to one. Staff foster children's vocabulary well with the use of open ended questions and children engage in conversations with others. They experiment and practise writing skills using a range of equipment such as finger painting and with pencils and paper. Few opportunities are provided for children to link sounds and letters although some children can recognise their own names from name cards.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are developing a good awareness of number, use these in games and when sorting toys into different groups i.e. dinosaurs sorted by colour, size and family. However there are missed opportunities for children to use counting in everyday situations. Staff introduce children to mathematical language in planned and spontaneous activities. Children's awareness of shape is well developed using a variety of tools such as blocks, craft activities and with everyday items on the shape table.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's natural curiosity is well fostered by staff, they are introduced to change through sessions and growth of seeds and bulbs. They gain an awareness of time as they talk about events that have or will happen i.e. new baby, holidays they have enjoyed. Children enjoy constructing with a variety of equipment and build elaborate models that have meaning. Few opportunities are provided for children to explore the local area or to gain an understanding how things work with programmable toys.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have opportunities to climb, slide and jump using equipment both inside and out. Staff nurture children's desires to be active when outside. They provide opportunity for children to balance using planks and large tyres and when elephants, balancing on string. Children's hand and eye co-ordination is developing well with the use of equipment such as pouring rice and lentils, small world figures, pencils, jigsaws and when fishing in water play. They gain an awareness of keeping healthy.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy creating using a range of colour, texture and techniques. They enjoy working spontaneously at their own pace. There is a good balance between adult and child led activities. Children enjoy singing and have built a wide repertoire of songs. However, have limited opportunity to experiment with musical instruments. Children engage in some role play. This is limited and could be extend further to provide children with opportunity to express themselves using their own imagination.

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

- Extend opportunities for children to link sounds to letters and to use rhyme and rhythm to reinforce different sounds and syllables.
- Provide more opportunity for children to use counting in everyday situations.
- Increase the range of role play experiences available to the children to develop their imaginations in a variety of familiar situations.
- Develop planning to include time for children to use the computer, explore their local environment, use programmable toys in order to discover how things work and to experiment with musical instruments. plans should also incorporate aims and objectives, resources and an evaluation of the activities.
- Extend opportunities for parents to gain information about their child's progress and achievements and to have access to the activity plans in order to extend learning at home.

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.