



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 226890

DfES Number: 595060

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 15/09/2004
Inspector Name Judith Chinnery

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Out of School Day Care, Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Hamilton Community College Playgroup
Setting Address Hamilton Community College
Keyham Lane West
Leicester
Leicestershire
LE5 1RT

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Leicester City Council

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Leicester City Council
Address Hamilton Community College
Keyham Lane West
Leicester
Leicestershire
LE5 1RT

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

Hamilton Community College opened a playgroup in 1988 and an out of school club in 1999. Both groups operate from a designated early years base within the college and have access to the community hall, youth wing and computer suite. The college is situated between the Hamilton and Netherhall Housing Estates and draws children from these and other nearby areas.

There are currently 17 children from two to five years on roll in the playgroup. This includes a funded three-year-old. The group supports children who have special educational needs and six children who speak English as an additional language. There are 30 children from four to eight years on roll in the out of school group.

The playgroup opens during term time, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 09:15 until 11:45 and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons from 13:00 until 15:00. The out of school group opens every week day during term time from 15:00 until 17:30.

There are four members of staff working with the children in the playgroup, of these, three have early years' qualifications. There is one member of staff on a training programme. There are three members of staff in the out of school group working with the children. None of them hold a qualification in playwork. The group receives support from a mentor teacher from the Leicester City Early Years' Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

The provision for children in this group is satisfactory overall, although many aspects of the care children receive are good. The well established and experienced staff team work well together to ensure all children's needs are met. However, as yet, neither manager holds an appropriate level three qualification in early years or play work. Good use is made of the available space for children to be able to move and play freely. A wide variety of resources and attractive displays of children's own work welcome families and entice children to learn. Records are kept accurately and

up-to-date, contributing effectively to the safe and efficient running of the group.

Knowledgeable staff are vigilant about children's safety, ensuring precautions such as socket covers are in place, while children are encouraged to participate in good hygiene practices to prevent the spread of infection. Snack time is used well to promote healthy eating, with children being encouraged to try different fruits and vegetables. Staff work with each child sensitively and flexibly to enable them to settle quickly. They take care to use key words in a child's own language to support them in learning English and they also support children with different needs well. Staff's knowledge of the local area child protection guidelines is sound.

Children form good relationships with the staff and settle quickly and confidently into the group. They have access to resources and activities which help them to develop good skills in mathematics, speaking well, creating their own artwork and using their imagination in role-play. Staff set clear and consistent boundaries, managing children's behaviour well and kindly reinforcing acceptable behaviour with gentle reminders and explanations.

Staff work hard to develop good relationships with parents. They are good at gleaning information about children from parents in order to meet the individual care needs of the children and wishes of the parents.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last Children Act Inspection, the group was asked to make improvements to various procedures, policies and records and to improve the qualifications of the staff.

Since the last inspection, the group has made suitable and appropriate improvements to their record keeping. The child protection procedures are now based on local Area Child Protection Committee guidance. The complaints procedure now includes contact details for the regulator. The special needs statement has been updated and is now consistent with current legislation and guidance. Written procedures are available in the event that a child is lost or not collected from the group. An up-to-date public liability insurance certificate is now displayed and documents for vehicles used in the group are available for inspection. These changes contribute effectively to the safe and efficient running of the setting.

All staff are now qualified appropriately in first aid for infants and young children, ensuring that accidents are managed and treated safely. However, the group's managers have not yet gained level three qualifications in early years and play work.

What is being done well?

- Staff are sensitive and flexible in their approach to children, taking care to help them settle in to the group in their own way and time.
- Good relationships are built between staff and parents through making time to talk and share information about children's care, their likes and dislikes.

- Staff work well together to provide exciting experiences for children which help them learn and develop good skills, such as in making play dough and different role-play scenarios, such as a beach.
- The provision of nutritious foods such as fruit, carrots and cucumber encourage children to be healthy and try different foods.

What needs to be improved?

- qualifications of the managers
- systems to keep up-to-date with changes in early years' practice.

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 must take the following actions by the date shown

Std	Action	Date
1	develop and implement an action plan detailing how the qualification criterion for managers and staff will be met.	31/10/2004

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
2	develop systems which enable staff to keep up-to-date with and implement changes in early years' practice.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for children is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff use their sound knowledge of the foundation stage well to provide a good balance between adult and child-led activities. Most children are suitably challenged. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children with special educational needs are included and supported effectively. Staff make good use of multicultural resources and use key words in other languages to support children who speak English as an additional language. Versatile resources are used well to enhance children's learning in all areas. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is generally suitably observed and recorded. Activity plans are usually well thought-out and have appropriate learning intentions. However, individual children's assessments are not always used effectively in planning for their next steps in learning, nor are all aspects of the stepping stones consistently covered.

Leadership and management is generally good. The well established and experienced team of staff work well together to improve the care and education offered. The largely informal systems used to monitor the group's strengths and weaknesses and the considerable uncertainties regarding their line management structure mean that the group lacks some direction. Weaknesses in some areas of the educational provision have gone unchecked.

Staff have a generally good partnership with parents and carers, who are well informed about the curriculum and have many opportunities to talk about their children and what they have learnt. The show and tell time and home activity sheet are used effectively to involve parents in their child's learning. However, parents are less well informed about children's actual progress towards the early learning goals and have fewer opportunities to share and contribute to target setting for their next steps.

What is being done well?

- Children are making very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Staff work individually with children to ensure they settle well and become secure and confident within the group.
- Children are developing an enthusiasm for early science. They are keen to see how things change, such as in cooking activities, and how things work and grow in the natural world.
- Staff are good at including all children in activities. They support children with special educational needs effectively, working closely with their parents to meet their individual needs.

- Staff's use of key words in other languages, signs and symbols enable children who speak English as an additional language to make good progress in learning English.

What needs to be improved?

- links between planning and the assessment of children's progress
- coverage of all aspects of the stepping stones in plans and assessments
- recording of children's progress towards the early learning goals
- monitoring of the educational provision
- involvement of parents in their children's progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last Nursery Education Inspection, the group was asked to provide more opportunities for children to develop their large physical skills; to improve children's access to technology; to improve the emphasis on linking sounds with letters and opportunities to write. The group has made generally good progress in relation to these.

Since the last inspection, staff have made considerable progress in ensuring that children have access to simple technological resources. Staff have taken up training and now use a commercial phonics programme together with singing and rhymes to ensure that children can make effective links between different sounds and letters. Opportunities for children to write and make marks have also increased considerably. Some improvements have been made in providing more opportunities for children to develop their large physical skills through the purchase of more equipment, although the activities provided do not always enable children to make sufficient progress in this area.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are keen to get involved in activities and participate for growing periods of time to complete tasks such as making play dough. Most children leave their carer confidently and are developing close relationships with staff and other children. They behave really well, needing few reminders about acceptable behaviour. Children are willing to tackle appropriate self help tasks and take care of their own needs. They are eager to talk about their family and share birthday celebrations.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children communicate well with a variety of gestures and words. They willingly offer explanations and listen well to instructions and stories. They recognise different sounds through music and rhymes and are developing a keen interest in books. They handle them well and pick out their favourites to read with staff. Children enjoy making marks in different media such as paint. Some can explain what they are drawing, while most hold a pencil correctly and can form lines and circles.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children happily count the numbers of children and adults present each day and ably count by rote up to ten. They also use their acquired counting skills spontaneously during play. Children confidently sort and match objects by type and size. They have a growing awareness of shape and willingly try puzzles. However, children are less able to offer solutions to simple calculating problems such as dividing fruit between the group, taking one away or adding one to a set of objects.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are enthusiastic in their desire to see how things work and change, such as when exploring the water cycle. They are developing good skills in joining and designing and can use simple technology, such as tape recorders, easily. They have a lively interest in familiar people and the world around them and have particular fascination in the Royal Air Force. Their awareness of other cultures is growing considerably through celebrating different festivals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Most children move in a variety of ways such as running and jumping around the room. They negotiate skilful pathways around equipment and avoid each other when manoeuvring the dolls' prams. Children's small hand movements are developing well; they can manipulate dough and handle tools safely. Most children cope well with their own personal care needs. However, older and more able children have less opportunity to progress and reach their potential in large body skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children love to use different colours and textures to create their own art work both in two and three-dimensions. They are developing in confidence with singing and enjoy listening to a wide variety of music. Children effectively use their imaginations using clothes and equipment to support their role-play in different scenarios. While children explore their environment with their senses well, they are less able to explain their intentions and explore their feelings.

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

- ensure that the assessment of children's progress towards the early learning goals is clearly recorded so that the targets set for children's next steps are based more securely on the stepping stones and information from parents, and that plans are then more accurately based on the child's interests and what they need to do next
- ensure that planning and assessment systems use and cover all aspects of the stepping stones regularly and consistently
- develop systems to monitor and evaluate the educational provision more effectively.

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.