



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 129363

DfES Number: 583289

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 06/10/2004
Inspector Name Sheila Harrison

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Little Acorns - Warners End Playgroup
Setting Address Warners End Community Centre
Stoneycroft, Warners End
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
Hertfordshire
HP1 3QG

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Warners End Neighbourhood Association
302384

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Warners End Neighbourhood Association
Address Warners End Community Centre
Stoneycroft, Warners End
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP1 3QG

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

Little Acorns Pre-School has been open for over 25 years. It takes place in Warners End Community Centre, Warners End, Hemel Hempstead. The pre-school has sole use of a large playroom with kitchen facilities, toilets, a quiet room and a secure outside play area.

There are 27 children from 2 years 9 months to 5 years on roll. This includes 20 funded 3 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00.

Four part-time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. One staff member is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision of nursery education at Little Acorns, Warners End is good. Children are making very good progress in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff are developing knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They provide a broad, balanced and purposeful curriculum. Planning is undertaken by and discussed amongst the team and learning intentions are understood and evaluated. Assessment loosely informs the planning with areas of children's development highlighted.

Staff have meaningful relationships with the children and are successful in supporting them through the keyworker system and helping them understand acceptable behaviour. Staff extend the learning experiences and challenge using open ended questions. They encourage the children's confidence, concentration and listening skills. Adults allow enough time for children to consolidate their learning. Worthwhile use is made of resources and the organisation of the space indoors encourages a positive attitude to learning. However, this occasionally limits children's ability to exercise sufficiently.

Provision is made for children with special needs to ensure they are included in all activities and appropriate support is given.

Leadership and management are generally good. Basic links with the community centre generally assist in professional development. Information from informal staff observations, training courses and staff meetings are used effectively to monitor and improve the quality of care and education. Staff intend to expand the curriculum outside. They have support from the qualified teacher scheme.

The partnership with parents is very good and contributes positively to the children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child and to be involved in their child's learning.

What is being done well?

- Staff have become a consistent and strong team. They have a clear awareness of the knowledge, skill and attitudes to children's learning. They take account of individual strengths and develop many "small step challenges" if required. This ensures the children are well supported, confident and fully occupied.
- Staff build easy and trusting relationships with children. They manage the children's behaviour well and have high expectations of the children's achievements. Children have many opportunities to share, take turns and

negotiate differences. Staff are good role models using appropriate praise and encouraging good manners.

- The partnership with the parents is strong. Information about the child and the family is sought before a child starts with the pre-school enabling children to be confident and comfortable talking to others about their family. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning, through participating in the helper rota, the video loan scheme. Children take a book to read at home and the children's achievements at the construction table are on show to parents before being put away at the end of the session.
- Children's progress in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy is very good. Staff provide a wide range of challenging and practical activities to support the children's learning in these areas. This includes concentrating on areas children find difficult and is linked to their interests.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to exercise and to work on a larger scale
- systems to develop the quality of the provision and staff's training needs.

What has improved since the last inspection?

n/a

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children respond positively to staff and have formed strong relationships with their peers. They behave well, lining up quickly and quietly with the child at the front wearing the train driver's hat. They take turns, sharing fairly with care for each other and the staff. Their confidence and independence is promoted with the organisation of the resources and the sensitive support of the staff during story and snack time. Children have many chances to talk about their homes and families.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children talk confidently to each other, adults and in groups. Staff gently extend the children's vocabulary and thinking skills with the memory games. They have many chances to recognise their names and the sounds of the letters. They use their fingers to trace the letters. Children respond with enjoyment to rhymes and at story time, recalling and acting out a favourite story. They handle books carefully and know that print carries meaning. Children take books home to share with their families.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are counting for a purpose; counting children and cups at snack time. They recognise numerals and are using maths in practical ways in their play. Children compare size when choosing boxes and weight with a tin for the memory game, in the sand tray and when carrying the milk at snack time. Staff extend an activity with magnets to include sorting by shape and colour linked to a child's interest. Children are beginning sequence toys, but have few opportunities for simple calculations.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show curiosity and observe changes when water is added to dry sand or water turning cloudy when mixed with milk. They miss chances to see the fruit complete before snack time. Children select resources to build and design in 2 and 3 dimensions with shapes and junk modelling. They have ample construction equipment to build freely and follow plans. Models are kept to show the parents. Children gain a productive awareness of the cultures and beliefs during celebrations of festivals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children line up quickly with minimum disturbance and move skilfully around the pre-school with control and co-ordination. Children use a range of small tools and equipment confidently. They learn to use the sellotape dispenser and a range of scissors. Children occasionally use the outdoor area or hall to practise with bikes and the trampoline, although chances to exercise and feel the effects on the body are limited.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children experience the properties of glue, different materials and recognise primary colours. There is a varied range of role-play and small world play materials with the home corner and estate agents being supported by relevant artefacts. Children take full part in a delightful retelling of the Lion Hunt story. Children use their senses, feeling the textures and hearing the sounds of the seashells in the sand.

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 sufficient chances for children to exercise and to work on a larger scale
- develop systems to review the quality of the provision and staff's training 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.