



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127805

DfES Number: 580031

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 04/10/2004
Inspector Name Julie Washer

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Blues Pre School
Setting Address London Road
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire
CM23 3LU

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Blues Pre-School Nursery 297486

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Blues Pre-School Nursery
Address London Road
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire
CM23 3LU

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

Blues Pre-School opened in 1979. It operates from a mobile unit in the grounds of Bishop's Stortford High School, close to the town centre. The group serves the local area and surrounding villages.

There are currently 76 children from 2 to 4 years on roll. This includes 35 funded 3 year olds and 1 funded 4 year old. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group welcomes children with special needs and who have English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00 Mondays to Fridays and 12:30 to 15:00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays and 12:45 until 14:45 on Mondays. A toddler group operates from 13:15 until 14:45 on Thursdays.

Seven members of staff work with the children. Over the half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a qualified teacher.

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 Blues Pre-School is good. It enables children to make very good progress in communication, language and literacy and physical development and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff provide an exciting learning environment using a broad range of resources imaginatively to promote the children's learning across all the six areas of the Foundation Stage. They have a good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn, especially those needing additional support and they achieve high levels of interaction with them. Staff plan a well thought out and exciting range of play opportunities. However, on occasions there are missed opportunities to effectively challenge the children. Staff are currently reviewing the planning system and are working hard to ensure the children's assessment records and short term plans link more closely to the stepping stones and early learning goals. Children's behaviour is very good and praise and encouragement are freely used.

Leadership and management is generally good. Staff work effectively together as a team and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. They attend frequent staff meetings to discuss the children's learning and have a positive working relationship. Staff are committed to providing good quality care and education for all children through attending relevant training courses and reviewing the children's educational programme. Annual appraisal systems are in place.

Partnership with parents is very effective. They are provided with good quality information about the setting, particularly relating to the Foundation Stage. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the nursery in any way they can including being part of the committee and coming into sessions to help. They are made very welcome and are able to talk to the friendly and approachable staff daily about their children's progress and learning.

What is being done well?

- Parents are provided with good quality information. Details about the Foundation Stage are well presented for them and includes the six areas of learning. Topics and weekly activities are displayed on the notice board. Parents come into the sessions to help and in this way are actively involved in their children's learning. Positive comments were received from parents stating that they are very pleased with the curriculum and are always aware of what topics the children are learning about each week. They feel the staff are approachable and keep them well informed of their children's progress.
- Staff work well together as a team and are committed to providing good quality care and education for the children. They have attended many relevant training courses. Staff know the children well and interact effectively

with them, especially those needing additional support.

- Topics are well thought out to offer stimulating and exciting learning for children. They enthusiastically re-call and talk about things they have made or activities they have participated in.
- Children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing well. Staff extend children's vocabulary as they play the soundtrack game and listen to and name the sounds they hear, such as a violin and thunder and lightening.
- Children write for a variety of purposes as they take orders in the role play restaurant and write in their Christmas, Easter, Mother's and Father's day cards. They practise letter formation when writing their names and other simple words.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for the older and more able children to develop their calculation skills
- the accessibility of resources to give children a greater choice
- the planning system so that children's assessment records and short term plans link more closely to the stepping stones and early learning goals.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre-school has made generally good progress since the last inspection. There were two key issues for action:

Provide more opportunities for four year old children to take part in practical activities to extend their calculation skills.

One member of staff has recently attended a maths training course. The manager is currently reviewing further training for staff relating to a numeracy pack she has obtained. Calculators have been introduced to the children to use in their play. However, there is limited evidence of children taking part in practical activities to extend their calculation skills through planned activities. This still remains a key issue.

Provide more opportunities for children to explore music and sing.

Children sing actions songs and rhymes daily and explore musical instruments once a week. During the inspection children enjoyed taking part and singing action songs such as Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes, Five Little Speckled Frogs, and the Hokey Cokey. A parent teacher has visited the nursery and played the cello to the children.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are happy, motivated and keen to learn. They are involved and interested in their play and are able to persevere at their tasks. Children are able to share and take turns and behave very well. They are forming good relationships with staff and each other and are confident to talk to visitors at the group. Children are developing personal independence skills, however, the organisation of some resources does not allow children to operate independently.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children listen and respond well to instructions, stories and information. They enjoy looking at books independently and use them to locate information. More able children can link sounds to letters and practise letter formation as they write their name or copy words. Children's vocabulary is extended as they play the soundtrack game and name the sounds. Children are provided with resources to develop their mark making skills during role play situations, such as taking orders in the restaurant.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy singing number rhymes and songs as they use their fingers to count currant buns and speckled frogs. They learn about numbers as they place the date on the weather chart. Children use language to describe shapes and learn about volume and capacity as they use resources during water play. Staff use meaningful language to help children develop their early mathematical thinking. However, there is limited evidence of children practising their calculation skills through planned activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children observe living things as they watch cress, pansies, runner beans and mushrooms grow. They look at tadpoles as they change and grow and enjoy making bread rolls as they watch the ingredients rise. Through planned activities children create binoculars using tubes and sticky tape. However, there are missed opportunities for them to assemble and join materials freely and for them to develop their information and communication skills. Children celebrate both traditional and cultural festivals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have the opportunity to refine and develop their physical skills using a range of small and large equipment. Children show an awareness of space as they pedal the bikes outside and participate in team games such as a pancake race. They use the large climbing frame inside and practise balancing outside as they throw beanbags to play hopscotch. Fine motor skills are developed using a range of construction kits, toys, puzzles, mark making materials and tools to mix and spread.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children explore colour and textures through a range of guided art and craft activities including weaving coloured card, wellington boot printing and creating necklaces using cereals. However, there are limited opportunities for them to express their ideas freely, choosing their own craft materials and equipment. They enjoy making musical shakers and playing the keyboard. The role play area is changed frequently enabling children to act out many real life and imaginary experiences.

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

- provide opportunities for the older and more able children to develop their calculation skills
- review the accessibility of resources to give children a greater choice
- further develop the planning system so that children's assessment records and short term plans link more closely to the stepping stones and early learning goals.

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.