



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

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DfES Number: 510036

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 24/02/2004

Inspector Name Sue Stuart

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type

Setting Name St Thomas Garnet School

Setting Address Parkwood Road
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH5 2BH

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name

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

St Thomas Garnet Kindergarten is part of an independent day school in the Boscombe area of Bournemouth, Dorset. The kindergarten operates from a self-contained unit in the school grounds. Most of the children who attend live in the local area.

There are currently 70 children from three months to five years olds on the kindergarten roll. This includes 25 funded three year old and 4 four funded four year old children in the pre-school class. In addition there are seven funded four year old children in the main school reception class. Children attend for a variety of sessions in the pre-school, and full time in the reception class. The setting supports children with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The school is open five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 08.45 to 15.15.

The kindergarten manager has an Advance Diploma in Childcare and Education and NVQ level 3 in Childcare and Education. All four staff members of the pre-school room hold relevant early years qualifications. A qualified teacher and early years assistant work in the reception class. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). Members of staff take part in externally run professional development courses.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St Thomas Garnet pre-school and reception class provision is of good quality and children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching is generally good. The strengths are due to the interaction of staff who help children to develop their independence and confidence. Inexperienced staff, in the pre-school are developing their knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. They plan an appealing and appropriate range of activities but do not always focus on extending the learning quite enough. Staff offer interesting programmes based on all six areas of learning. They provide effective challenges for older children, particularly in mathematics, so they record their observations and findings well. They are aware of how children learn and provide a variety of purposeful practical activities. Children behave very well in response to the high expectations and positive support of all staff. The school provides a good range of equipment to support learning in all areas including those reflecting awareness of other cultures. The organisation of furniture and resources enables children to move freely around their rooms. The routine allows time for children to work individually with an adult, and to select their own activities, although there is scope for monitoring the balance between these ways of working further.

Leadership and management are very good. Much of the success of the setting is due to the strong partnership between the Head teacher and staff, this ensures a shared understanding of good early years practice. Staff are keen to develop their skills and improve standards. However, there are too few opportunities for them to monitor the nursery education together.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are well informed about events and daily topics. Parents are given opportunities to be involved and share in their child's learning, and to discuss their progress and achievements.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. They are confident, interested and able to work on their own. Behaviour is very good.
- Staff have good relationships, are caring, providing positive role-models for the children. They offer constant encouragement and praise.
- Staff in the pre-school provide a good range of practical topical activities that encourages children's progress in physical development.
- An excellent range of activities, and competent teaching, in the reception class, ensures that children's progress in all areas is very good.

What needs to be improved?

- Challenges for younger children so they are appropriate and include more daily emphasis on language and mathematics.
- The evaluation of the balance of activities to ensure there is enough free choice for the older children
- The monitoring by all staff of the nursery education programme.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Point for consideration 1

Enhance the programme for language and literacy by reviewing the role-play area in order to widen the children's experiences, extend their ideas and engage them in sustained, and high-quality role-play.

Point for consideration 2

Enhance the quality of teaching by ensuring that adults regularly become involved during free-choice practical activities, in order to provide children with additional challenge and stimulation.

Generally good improvement has been made to the pre-school and reception class since the last inspection. The pre-school room now occupies a purpose built extension. The layout of the room provides space for all areas of learning, including a specific area for role-play. This has a positive impact on children's communication and language development. The programme for teaching shows how staff are deployed ensuring that they regularly become involved during free-choice practical activities, however, there is scope for further development in this area.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children confidently share their experiences and ideas, relating well with each other and adults, particularly during whole group times. Children are beginning to work independently, are interested, and involved in selecting and using equipment, for example, number materials. They demonstrate good personal independence. Behaviour is very good, children follow positive golden rules, and show care and concern for others. Children take turns and share fairly, for example while choosing books.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers and engage easily in conversations with each other and with adults. They develop their ability to think and read from a good range of books, both for enjoyment and information. Children link sounds to letters, such as words beginning with 'p'. They recognise and write their names. Some write simple sentences, forming letters correctly. They practise writing for a variety of purposes. However, younger children had fewer opportunities to develop these skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children learn to count and use numbers during every day activities, although there were few chances for younger children to develop their understanding of numbers. They are beginning to understand addition and subtraction and record their findings. They respond well to a range of practical activities, such as making number lines. They learn to use shape and size through meaningful hands-on activities. They compare and sort objects and solve practical problems, such as a matching shape game.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn about the natural world and features in their environment in many ways, such as by recording the winter weather. Children show curiosity, question how and why things work. They construct and make items such as Humpty Dumpty. They frequently talk about past and present events in their own lives and about the lives of others such as the fire officers. Children learn about other cultures, for example, life in China. They use ICT resources well to support their learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn how to move confidently with control and co-ordination, showing awareness of space both indoors and outdoors. Children develop physical control by for instance using bats to toss bean bags. They recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active during the cold weather. They handle a variety of tools and materials, for example to create Chinese dragons. They use scissors and glue, and playdough confidently.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have good opportunities to explore texture in both two and three dimensions using a variety of art materials. They have opportunities to respond to taped music, and to play instruments. They express their ideas and imagination through a range of pretend resources, such as, role-playing fire-fighting, and miming pancake making in drama. Children explore through their senses, by for example tasting and smelling fruit while studying the book 'Handa's Surprise'.

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 staff become more positively involved with children's learning, providing appropriate challenges in all six areas of learning, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematics.

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.