



Dolphins Childcare Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY300144
Inspection date	12 May 2006
Inspector	Julie Neal
Setting Address	North Petherton Infant School, North Petherton, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 6LU
Telephone number	01278661359
E-mail	
Registered person	Dolphins Childcare Centre
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Dolphins Childcare Centre is a privately owned provision based in its own building in the grounds of North Petherton Infant School. It was registered in 2005 to provide care for a maximum of 45 children under 8 years of age. The provision provides full day care for children under 5 years of age, including funded nursery education sessions for 3- and 4-year-old children. Wrap around care for children attending the Infant school and the adjacent Junior school is provided by the breakfast club, after

school club, and holiday playscheme. There are currently 75 children on the roll, 28 of whom are funded 3- and 4-year-olds. The provision operates during term time and school holidays and is open 08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday. It has an enclosed garden for outdoor play and children also have access to the school playing fields. There are 7 members of staff working with the children. Of these, 5 have a level 3 childcare qualification, one of whom is working towards a degree in early years education. Another member of staff has a level 2 childcare qualification and is working towards a level 3. Support is provided by the local authority. Overnight care is not provided.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well within the setting because there are very good routines and systems in place to maintain hygiene and to encourage health promotion. For example, staff have excellent cleaning routines, such as making sure the toilets are cleaned regularly during the day, cleaning tables between activities, and cleaning toys weekly. They are extremely aware of the possibility of cross infection and show vigilance when assisting children with personal care to minimise any risk. For example, children are protected because staff wear gloves when changing nappies and also ensure they wash their hands when they remove the gloves. Children learn to manage their personal care well; for instance, children know why they should wash their hands before meals and are aware of the risk from germs. All documentation relating to children's health, such as medicine and accident records, are well maintained. In addition, there is a clear sickness policy in place that is implemented effectively in order to support children's well-being.

Children enjoy a good variety of healthy food at meal and snack times. They are developing a good understanding about food that is good for them because they have plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables at meals and staff discuss what they eat with them. Breakfast, lunch and tea are available, with an option for a cooked meal at both lunch time and tea time. Drinks are available to children throughout the session and older children are clearly aware they need to drink plenty of fluids in warm weather because they help themselves whenever they are hot and thirsty. Staff ensure younger children are regularly offered drinks, particularly in hot weather and during active play.

Children benefit from excellent access to fresh air and exercise. Older children choose whether they wish to play indoors or outside, and younger children benefit from times where they have sole use of the garden and the play equipment. Children use a good variety of equipment such as bats and balls, bikes, scooters, hoops, and climbing and balancing equipment. This results in children who move with confidence and who are well co-ordinated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a safe and child friendly environment where space and resources are used very well to support care and maximise play and learning opportunities. Older children are able to move freely between indoors and outside as they play because staff have organised the premises well to ensure they can do so safely. Staff are vigilant about the maintenance of toys and equipment, thereby minimising possible risks to children.

Children are safe and secure because access to the premises is strictly controlled, with entry restricted by use of a coded key pad. Staff have good daily systems in place that support children's safety; for example, effective checks are made of all areas each day to ensure there are no hazards to children, and all visitors are signed in and out and never left unsupervised. Suitable, mainly informal, risk assessments are made, for example of the premises and trips out such as nature walks, and these are overall effective. Structuring these, for instance by developing a process of recording risk assessments, will further enhance children's safety by ensuring a consistent formula for identifying potential risks. Children learn very well about aspects of personal safety, such as learning to cross roads when out for walks. They take part in very well organised fire drills and younger as well as older children know what they should do when they hear the fire alarm. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the settings child protection procedures which further supports the safe environment experienced by children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children immensely enjoy the excellent range of activities that encourage progress and development for all ages. Children are actively encouraged to make choices in their play, and they very confidently move freely between activities as they eagerly explore resources. For example, children under 3 years of age relish playing with water, enjoying pouring this into a variety of containers and looking at the colours changing as a member of staff adds food colourings to it. Children become absorbed in games they are encouraged to develop for themselves; for instance, older children attending the after school club play for an extended time with a 'fortune telling' game they have devised for themselves. Children are involved in developing their own activity programme, with staff being very open to suggestions from children of all ages. Older children have a dynamic role in planning and organising activities for the after school club and playscheme, and confidently present their thoughts and ideas, which are respected and acted upon.

Staff have an excellent understanding of children's developmental stages which is demonstrated in the dynamic planning of activities. These are child centred and provide exciting play opportunities that children are eager to participate in. Staff monitor the progress of younger children very well through their excellent observations, which they assess using the Birth to three matters framework. This is used extremely effectively to evaluate the progress children are making in relation to each aspect and component of the framework, and to plan to ensure good levels of challenge for each child in order to encourage individual development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Staff demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and implement this very well. They are clear about the learning intentions of activities because all staff participate in planning and discuss curriculum plans at regular staff meetings. Activities are adjusted well to meet the needs of individual children, for example identifying where children may need additional support in order to enjoy participating, or which children will benefit from being extended. Staff further demonstrate their high levels of competence in delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum in their confidence in encouraging child led activities while ensuring that learning objectives are achieved. Staff make very good observations of what children do and they use these effectively, combined with their extensive knowledge of individual children, when planning activities to ensure that children are challenged well. Overall, children's progress is monitored effectively as staff share information well, for instance at team meetings, and they have excellent understanding of children's stages of development. However, processes used to record children's progress towards the early learning goals are inconsistently maintained and so do not clearly show the good progress children are making.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. They are confident and have good relationships with each other and with adults. They concentrate well on chosen activities, and become engrossed in what they do. Children are very confident communicators and thoroughly enjoy opportunities such as 'show and tell' to share their news with each other. They recognise letters well and are able to correctly identify familiar words such as their names and the days of the week because they benefit from a print-rich environment. Children confidently make marks and most children are able to form recognisable letters, with some clearly writing their names. They generally practise their writing in their play, such as making lists in role play; however, other opportunities to develop these skills are not consistently promoted by staff, such as encouraging children to label their own work.

Children are very confident in their use of mathematical concepts. They count very confidently and with purpose, and practise this in everyday contexts throughout the session, for example counting the number of children present and the number of carrot slices on each plate at snack time. Children use mathematical problem solving skills well and can do simple calculations with confidence, such as identifying when there is 'one more' or when groups of items are 'the same'. They use positional language accurately and show a good awareness of shape, size and measure. Children learn effectively about the wider world and explore and investigate confidently. For example, they compare the different effects made when blowing bubbles gently and fiercely, comparing different sizes and how the bubbles move quickly or slowly through the wand. They are developing a very good understanding of time and place and can confidently talk about different aspects of their lives. Children are very competent in the use of computers and simple technology because they have free access to a computer and a good range of programmable toys and equipment.

Children express themselves very well using a variety of media and materials. They thoroughly enjoy using paints, play dough, and other materials as they explore their thoughts and ideas. For example, children freely use their hands, brushes, sponges and cloths to create their own pictures and designs, and they are encouraged to do so by staff. This means that children are confident in exploring creative ideas. Imaginary play is very good and children use resources well in developing role play. Children engage in a variety of musical activities and use a good range of percussion instruments. Children are developing good hand-to-eye co-ordination because they have free access to tools such as scissors, hammers, knives and dough cutters, which they learn to use safely.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely confident and relaxed in the setting. They demonstrate very high levels of self esteem as they interact with each other and with adults because their specific needs are met, and staff listen to them and respect their thoughts and ideas. Staff have an excellent understanding of equal opportunities and inclusion, and show very high levels of awareness of the diverse needs of children and families attending the nursery. They ensure that individual children's requirements are very well met because they communicate extremely effectively with parents and monitor the effectiveness of what they do well in order that each child in the setting is encouraged to progress. They ensure all children are enabled to participate in activities and structure these very well so that children are supported and challenged effectively according to their age and stage of development. Any concerns regarding children's progress are quickly identified through good processes of observation, and children benefit from the staff team's pro-active approach in ensuring these are addressed. Children with special educational needs receive good levels of support because staff work extremely well with parents and external agencies to ensure that children's individual needs are met.

Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and very good manners. Very young children are happy and confident because their personal care routines are met, which ensures they feel content and secure. Children quickly develop understanding of the settings ground rules and expectations, and older children, particularly those who attend the after school club and playscheme, are involved in setting boundaries. This means they develop a strong sense of ownership of the provision and this therefore encourages positive behaviour. Older children within the setting have a very positive impact on children under 8 years because they are consistently kind and helpful to the younger children and so provide very good role models. Staff support children's behaviour very well. They are calm, consistent and encouraging in their approach. This results in children who cheerfully take responsibility and who enthusiastically volunteer to help, for example helping to lay tables and to tidy up.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered. Children are learning very well about their own and other cultures and communities because they take part in interesting and meaningful activities that develop an understanding of diversity and difference.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. The information parents receive about the setting is of excellent quality and ensures they are fully informed and involved in their children's care and learning. Very good use is made of notice boards and newsletters to ensure they are informed about activities planned. Staff develop excellent relationships with parents and informal communication regarding their children's day is very good, with parents encouraged to stop and chat when they collect their children. In addition, use of a daily diary ensures that parents have a record of what children do each day, and this includes aspects of care such as feeds and sleep times for younger children. This benefits children by supporting consistency between home routines and the setting. Parents are asked to give feedback regarding the care and education of their children through questionnaires, and staff discuss these to ensure they meet the needs of parents and children. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning in a variety of ways that ensure that children are able to practise what they learn when at home. For example, children choose a book and an activity to take home each day, and parents are encouraged to help children identify items in the home that start with the 'letter of the week'. Parents receive excellent feedback regarding their children's progress towards the early learning goals, with regular opportunities to meet with keyworkers to discuss their individual achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for which they provide. Staff demonstrate good understanding of the setting's policies and procedures and implement these most effectively in order that children are kept safe and well. The setting's operational plan is comprehensive and is shared well with parents, ensuring they are aware of the processes underpinning the care and welfare of their children. Documentation supporting children's care and well-being is generally very well maintained, although there is no process to record risk assessments to ensure these are done consistently.

Children benefit from a well qualified staff team and high adult ratios. This means they receive good levels of adult support from practitioners who are confident in their skills. Clear procedures are in place to ensure that staff employed to work with children are suitable to do so, and thorough systems of induction ensure that they know procedures and routines relevant to the setting. A keyworker system is used throughout the provision and this is very effective in enabling children's development to be monitored and activities planned accordingly. For example, staff working with younger children make excellent use of the Birth to three matters framework as they assess the progress of each child, and they use this knowledge effectively to plan activities that encourage and challenge children well. Staff evaluate what they do well and identify areas where improvements can be made. For instance, they have recently reviewed activities that will enhance children's awareness of difference and cultural diversity.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Children benefit from a setting where there is a strong commitment to their development and

achievement. Staff are actively encouraged to evaluate their skills and to develop these through training, which ensures they are confident in their implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Processes of monitoring children's progress towards the early learning goals are effective overall, as staff are clear about children's individual stages of development and they use this knowledge well in planning to ensure suitable challenge for each child. However assessment records are not consistently maintained and so the progress children are making cannot be clearly seen.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further enhance the safety of children by developing a process to record risk assessments.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that children's assessment records are consistently maintained so that the progress they are making towards the early learning goals can be clearly

seen.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk