



Lower Covey Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	139385
Inspection date	14 June 2006
Inspector	Samantha Powis
Setting Address	Lower Covey, Chapel Lane, Yetminster, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 6LJ
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Registered person	Julie Partridge
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Lower Covey Day Nursery has been established for 15 years and is situated in the rural village of Yetminster, near to the town of Sherborne. The nursery is privately owned and provides full day care and out of school care for up to 63 children under the age of eight years.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday all year round from 08.00 until 18.00. It serves the local community and surrounding villages and places are offered to children who

come from a range of different backgrounds. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are catered for. The nursery is in receipt of the government funding for three- and four-year-olds. There are currently 105 children on the register of whom 35 are funded.

The setting occupies premises attached to the proprietor's home and is set on two floors. The ground floor offers care for up to 26 children aged birth to three years, as well as an out of school club which provides care after school and in the holidays for children aged from five up to 11 years. The first floor offers a Montessori pre-school for up to 22 children aged three to five years. Both floors have their own kitchenettes, toilets and storerooms. In addition the Nursery has a sleep room, laundry room and main kitchen for the preparation of meals. There is a communal playroom used by all the children. A lounge is available for selected children's television, and there are two outdoor play areas available.

The owner is Montessori qualified. She employs a full-time supervisor who has both NNEB and Montessori qualifications. There are 17 members of staff, most of whom are appropriately qualified in child care and education or are currently working towards a level 2 or level 3 qualification. All staff are experienced in their roles and continue to update their knowledge and skills through workshops and training. Support and curriculum advice is sought from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are familiar with good hygiene procedures and know they need to wash their hands after using the toilet or before eating. The risk of cross-infection between children is minimised as the staff follow good hygiene practices throughout the day. They support the children in ensuring their noses are wiped frequently, and make sure hands are washed or treated with anti-bacterial gel after doing so. Older children clean their teeth after having their lunch. They understand the importance of this, as they regularly participate in projects that increase their understanding of a healthy life style. Effective nappy changing procedures, including the use of gloves and promotes the health of younger children.

The children receive good care in the event of an accident or illness as most staff have a current first aid certificate. Well stocked first aid kits are available in all areas. Detailed records are maintained if a child has an accident, to ensure that accurate information is recorded and shared with parents. This helps to protect their ongoing health and well-being. Records are completed when medications are administered. However, clear procedures are not always followed in relation to obtaining written parental permission. Children are protected from the risk of infection by the implementation of a sickness policy that includes appropriate exclusion periods.

The children enjoy a healthy, nutritious, balanced diet. They tuck into the healthy home cooked lunches and tea's, such as roast lamb and fresh vegetables. The older children learn about healthy food options, as they discuss these during projects.

Babies are gradually introduced to new flavours, in close consultation with their parents. Foods are offered to them according to their individual needs and routines. The children are learning to recognise and respond to their bodies' needs, such as hunger and thirst. Older children can help themselves to drinks of water throughout the day and they also choose when they would like to have their snack. Younger children receive good support and encouragement to have regular food and drink.

All children in the nursery are developing a healthy lifestyle, with plenty of opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air. The children use a wide range of equipment to exercise and develop their large muscle skills, for example, wheeled toys, tunnels and slides. Children attending after school use up some energy by taking part in a penalty shoot out competition, and play co-operatively in a game of tennis. The children have many opportunities to use a wide range of tools and small pieces of equipment during the day. Older children use tools such as saws, hammers and nails, to make a compost bin for the growing garden area. This helps them to strengthen muscles and increases control. The toddlers have fun balancing along a wide beam, pretending to be pirates walking the plank. They jump carefully off the end, supported by staff, demonstrating their increasing skill and confidence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are settled and happy as they are cared for in an environment that is very well maintained and provides them with safe play areas. Children of different ages have separate rooms, which enables them to access resources that are appropriate for their stage of development. They benefit from accessing an exceptionally wide range of toys and equipment. All are of a good quality and checked regularly to ensure they are well maintained. Excellent consideration is given to the storage of resources to maximise choice for children, and encourage their independence. All areas are bright and stimulating. Children's work is displayed creatively, to increase interest and promote a sense of belonging. Imaginative use is made of the outdoor areas to increase children's experiences and enjoyment. Children have suitable clothing to allow them to use the areas in all weathers.

Children's safety is promoted by staff who are vigilant and regularly monitor play areas and the resources children are using. They give children clear explanations about how to use equipment and remind them of boundaries and expectations to keep themselves and others safe. Children are familiar with fire drill procedures, as these are practiced frequently. This helps to ensure children are safe in the event of an emergency. Effective consideration has been given to ensuring children are unable to leave the building unsupervised. High handles on doors mean that children cannot reach to open them, and outside areas are totally secure. However, full consideration has not been given to preventing others from gaining access to the building.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by the staff's clear understanding of child protection issues. This is underpinned by comprehensive policies and procedures to support staff in taking appropriate action in the event of any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children of all ages access a stimulating and exciting range of experiences that promote their progress and development. They enthusiastically participate in activities that are carefully planned to reflect their interests and support their learning. Babies and young children have excellent opportunities to explore and experience a wide range of materials that develop their sensory awareness and help them make sense of the world around them. They enjoy warm relationships with the staff, whose sensitive interactions help them to develop the confidence to try out new experiences and to become skilful communicators. Their steady progress is assured through careful documentation of their achievements and the staff's secure understanding and use of the Birth to Three Matters framework to underpin their good practice. Children who attend the out of school facility enjoy a relaxed environment, where socialising is encouraged. They have the freedom to make choices and decisions about their play, supported well by staff who have a very good understanding of their needs and individual personalities. They are provided with fun activities such as making "flubber" and playing games with their friends.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

Staff know the children very well and through careful observation they are able to identify and plan new experiences that interest and challenge the children. The children's development is extremely well promoted by staff who have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and provide them with interesting learning opportunities. They use techniques such as open-ended questioning to encourage children's curiosity, and become very involved in children's play and learning. The children's progress is carefully monitored and recorded in detailed assessment records. This information is then used effectively to identify appropriate targets for progression towards the early learning goals.

Children are eager and curious learners. They are interested in the activities and experiences offered and participate enthusiastically. They are inquisitive and enjoy finding out why things happen and how they work. They delight when offered a challenge, and make their own suggestions as to how to solve problems. They are highly independent and confidently initiate activities for themselves. They take full responsibility for their personal care, for example helping themselves to water when they are thirsty and washing up the cup afterwards. The children are able to concentrate well in order to complete their tasks, for example when ordering different sized objects, and they are always proud of their achievements.

Children are extremely confident and enthusiastic about participating in the wide range of activities offered. Due to this, they are making rapid progress in their learning. They concentrate extremely well at self chosen and adult-led activities, and are confident to organise their own learning through games and activities. They develop a very good understanding of letter sounds and begin to recognise and write familiar words. This is due to staff introducing them to letter sounds throughout

activities. They use a range of multi-sensory materials, such as sandpaper letters and numbers, which secures their understanding. Children have access to writing and mark making materials, which they use during their play. They enjoy books, and are absorbed as a familiar story is re-told by a member of staff. They join in with parts of the story they recall. Children are aware that print carries meaning. They point to text they see within the environment, relating it to their own experiences. Children use counting in many daily routines and activities, developing their understanding of number order and pattern. They use an excellent selection of resources that further promotes their understanding of small and large numbers. They recognise numerals and begin to sort objects according to their size, colour or type. Children enjoy trying to solve simple practical problems. They use estimation when they measure themselves against a tower they have built, and compare the results according to the size of the person.

Children successfully develop their understanding of the world as they discuss family events with staff. They begin to understand about the world around them as they take part in projects about themselves and their lives. For example, children are fascinated as they listen to the heartbeat of an unborn baby when the midwife visits the nursery to support their project on people who help us. Children learn about modern technology, as they use equipment such as "walkie talkies", calculators and computer keyboards during their play. They explore a variety of substances and textures, such as paint, glue and fabric. They use their imaginations well when playing with the small world play equipment, making up stories about the pirate ship, incorporating key phrases into their play. They create freely with paint, drawing materials and collage resources. They enjoy making music and singing familiar songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are fully valued and respected as individuals, which helps them to feel settled and secure. The staff know the children extremely well, and ensure their care is tailored towards their individual needs. For example, young babies follow their home sleeping and feeding patterns at nursery. All children are sensitively encouraged to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Children are really proud of the nursery, and enjoy sharing their achievements with visitors. They are learning to respect the feelings and views of others in the comfortable, relaxed and happy environment of the nursery. For example, older children develop their awareness of the feelings of others through regular attendance at the local church service specifically for children and becoming involved in projects about other countries and cultures.

Children with special needs receive excellent additional support as staff liaise very effectively with parents and other professionals to ensure there is good continuity of care. Individual learning plans are put in place, to ensure each child is encouraged to reach their full potential. An inclusive environment is created to allow all children to participate.

Children behave extremely well. They respond well to the calm and consistent approach of the staff, who demonstrate a secure understanding of children's different levels of ability and understanding. Clear boundaries, which children are reminded of regularly, ensure they understand what is expected of them. Excellent strategies are used to help children understand simple rules. For example, children fully understand that there is a limit to the number of children who can play with the pirate ship, as they need to wear one of the gold medallions to play. This helps them to share and take turns as they feel the system is fair. The children develop a very good understanding of how to adapt their behaviour for different situations. They are very polite and thoughtful, as staff act as good role models. Children enjoy the regular praise they receive from staff to reward their good behaviour.

The children's individual needs, progress and development are promoted very well because of the staff's strong commitment to working in close partnership with parents. Valuable links between home and the nursery and excellent communication procedures ensure that children are cared for in accordance with their parents' wishes. The children's continuity of care and the relaxed and comfortable environment of the nursery is promoted well by the warm welcome extended by staff to parents and children. Parents are valued, as their own skills are used to support the children's learning. A recent topic about "people who help us", was significantly enhanced as parents were able to share their professional knowledge about their own roles with the children. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Older children benefit from the strong links between home and nursery as their parents are encouraged to participate in their learning. They are very well informed about their children's progress and have opportunities to access and contribute to their children's assessment records. Parent's awareness and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum is extended as staff take the time to explain how activities encourage the children to make progress along the stepping stones. They receive detailed written information about the areas of learning and how these link with the Montessori teaching methods. They receive regular newsletters providing them with ideas for activities at home, which link in with current projects.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by well qualified and experienced staff who have a secure knowledge and understanding of child development. They work extremely well together as a team, valuing each others skills. Children are very well supervised at all times, due to the excellent consideration given to the deployment of staff. They are clear about their individual roles, which they carry out professionally to ensure children are well supported. This ensures they create a happy, relaxed and comfortable environment where children's progress, development and wellbeing is fully promoted.

Space and play areas are organised extremely effectively to provide appropriate

environments for each age group. Excellent use is made of both the indoor and outdoor environments to enhance children's experiences and development. Children's health and welfare is promoted through the implementation of well documented procedures and policies, which are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to be appropriate. Overall, children's safety is well protected. All regulatory documentation is in place and is generally used effectively to underpin the staff's good practice. The availability of clear policies and procedures also supports the communication with parents to promote continuity of care. The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the setting is outstanding. Excellent systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the nursery education provision. This ensures children are offered a wide range of interesting and exciting experiences that promote their progress and development. There is a strong commitment to improvement and all staff are supported well in developing and sustaining their own skills and following good practice.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, three recommendations were made to improve the care for children. These were regarding maintaining safety, recording administered medication and ensuring parents had information of how to contact the regulatory body. The group were also asked to give consideration to increasing children's use of creative resources and reviewing arrangements for rest times.

Daily checks are now completed on the premises and the outdoor areas. This ensures that all areas are safe for the children to use. Further consideration has been given to the recording of administered medication, however, at times records remain unclear. The written complaints procedure has been reviewed and now includes detailed information of the role and contact details of the regulatory body.

Creative materials are freely accessible for the older children, which provides them with ample opportunity to use their imaginations and develop their creativity. Rest times have been reviewed, and are now offered to meet the children's needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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 outstanding.

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):

- give further consideration to maintaining security
- further develop the systems used for recording administered medication, to ensure the required information is clearly recorded

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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