



Dovedale Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203907
Inspection date	06 December 2006
Inspector	Ann Marie Cozzi
Setting Address	102 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0JQ
Telephone number	01245 265611ext 3493
E-mail	information@chelmsford-college.ac.uk
Registered person	Willis Field
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Dovedale Nursery opened in 1991. It operates from two demountable buildings on the Moulsham Street campus of Chelmsford College. The nursery serves the local and wider area.

The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 38 children at any one time. There are currently 85 children on roll. This includes 51 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Core sessions are from 08.45 until 12.00 and 13.00 until 17.00. There are additional options for children to stay for lunch or all day.

Eleven members of staff work with the children. Eight members of staff including the manager hold relevant early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification level 2, 3 and 4. Two staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority and Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff support children well in learning about good hygiene practice through the daily routine. Some children use the toilets independently and know they need to wash their hands afterwards, whilst others are given gentle reminders by staff. Children's health and well being is promoted through the effective procedures followed by staff such as appropriate nappy changing procedures and the reporting of accidents. A high number of staff have completed first aid training to ensure children are cared for appropriately in the event of an accident.

Children's understanding of eating healthy foods is promoted through topics, discussion and offering a well balanced diet. The individual needs of children are met well as staff maintain records kept and pay particular attention to their dietary needs and preferences. Meal times are considered to be a sociable time and children are able to eat at their own pace without feeling rushed. They enjoy the snacks and meals that are prepared for them and benefit from the nutritious foods on offer such as fresh fruit and vegetables. Staff have attended relevant training in food preparation and hygiene to ensure children are protected from cross-contamination. Fresh drinking water is available to children at all times and their energy is consistently replenished.

Children are developing skills in managing their own bodies and enjoy many opportunities to practise these. They are able to judge body space in relation to others and demonstrate good control and co-ordination during activities and group games. The use of the free flow system between the indoor and outdoor area means that there are unlimited chances for children to receive fresh air and expend their energy as they run, jump and climb. The planned indoor and outdoor activities include opportunities for children to practise and develop skills, such as hand-eye co-ordination, for example, when using large construction materials to re-create 'Santa's sleigh', playing with sand and water and when using single handed tools and equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well protected from strangers by the clear monitoring systems used by the provision. These systems include the effective use of a visitors book, vigilance of staff and the door alarm system. Children are well supervised and are always in sight or hearing of the staff team. They are kept safe by the good use of risk assessments and the positive steps taken to minimise hazards, both inside and outside. Children's safety is optimized by staff's clear understanding of safety issues throughout the nursery and the provision of safe toys and equipment. The staff recognise the need to give fire safety appropriate priority in order that children receive

equal chances to develop an effective awareness of how to respond in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of keeping themselves and others safe. This is promoted well with children in order to help them learn about the rules and discover they are there to protect them from harm. The provision of good child accessible storage encourages children to develop their independence. Children learn to tidy away after playing and child-sized brushes enable them to be involved in keeping their play space free from hazards, such as spilt sand. They are becoming increasingly aware of their boundaries.

The overall welfare of children is safeguarded because staff are well informed about their role and responsibilities in child protection. There are clear written procedures for staff to follow if they have concerns about a child and this includes a procedure to follow regarding allegations made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children participate enthusiastically in a wide range of practical activities that support their individual development. As a result, they are busy enjoying a range of malleable resources such as sand, water and play dough to promote their senses. Younger children are encouraged to develop their independence as they access activities and play resources independently. They have fun as they listen to stories with interest joining in as they guess what may happen next. Some staff have recently completed training with regards to the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support their practice with children under three years. They make regular observations and are currently developing systems to monitor and assess younger children's progress.

The interaction between the children and staff is warm and positive. Children are confident to approach an adult for support and are able to express their needs or concerns without any hesitation. They are able to make decisions about what they would like to do next and the environment and resources are organised well to encourage this. Their achievements are valued and recognised by staff and their peers. This is because there are opportunities for children in group situations to share and talk about their art work such as Christmas decorations or the cards they have made. This contributes to their sense of belonging and a feeling of self-worth. Children benefit from the good use of the key worker system to ensure they settle well, and the monitoring of their development in order to nurture their interests to ensure progress.

Nursery Education.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. They flourish in an environment where staff are enthusiastic and confident in implementing a broad range of teaching techniques to extend children's thinking and listening skills. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation stage curriculum and activities are planned effectively to support children's individual learning needs. As a result, they are well occupied and interested in what is on offer. There are clear

systems in place for planning and assessment which are evolving to ensure observations are completed consistently for all six areas of learning as this is currently not being done.

Children learn to make decisions, develop confidence and become more independent because staff have a calm and encouraging approach. The play areas are organised well to facilitate the different ways children learn and reflect the six areas of learning. This enables children to initiate their own play and staff deployment effectively supports this. Most children are engaged in a range of practical tasks and activities that are stimulating, interesting and offer sufficient challenge. Good relationships are being established as children learn to share and take turns. There are many effective opportunities to strengthen children's self-help skills and foster independence through the integral routine. For example, as they pour themselves a drink or put on their coat. They are interested and involved in purposeful activities and at times show good levels of concentration such as when taking part in craft activities and when constructing a bridge out of wooden blocks.

Most children listen attentively and speak confidently as they engage in conversation. They are encouraged to notice print and learn to recognise their names, for example, as they self-register. Children have the opportunity to access a quiet room to look at books and to borrow books from the nursery. As a result, they are developing an interest in books and are learning to handle them appropriately. Children have good opportunities to mark-make and develop their early writing skills through a variety of methods including chalks, crayons and painting. Most children count confidently and experience sorting and sequencing through practical activities such as snack time and during creative play. They benefit from consistently hearing mathematical language which they successfully repeat to describe, colour, size, length and quantity. Children are supported by staff in problem-solving as they calculate how many more cups are needed at snack time. Children have good opportunities to investigate and explore a range of materials using their senses both indoors and outdoors. They confidently use information communication technology as they access the computer and explore a variety of equipment such as calculators, telephones and robots.

Children have very good experiences exploring and refining their skills while using different art resources; they eagerly paint or handle play dough to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings. Children enjoy songs and rhymes and joining in with the actions as they sing "twinkle, twinkle little star". They have access to a good range of musical instruments and sometimes listen to different types of music from around the world. Children mimic their observations of the world they live in, outside of the role play area, for example whilst outside, they enjoy driving the cars 'to go shopping'. They handle tools such as knives and forks, paint brushes and gluing implements with increasing control. Most children have a good awareness of the space around them as they move around obstacles and manoeuvre their wheeled toys.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are confident and independent. They are able to make informed choices and select resources for themselves as the environment is carefully planned to promote this. Children receive good individual care because their needs and circumstances are well known to the staff. The warm and positive language used by staff encourages children to participate in all activities.

Children have an awareness of the wider community through planned topics, trips in the local community and the good use of resources. This contributes to children developing a positive image of others and experiencing a welcoming environment. Staff are pro-active in accommodating children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, working closely with their parents and other agencies in the best interests of the child.

Children are well behaved and staff use plenty of positive praise and encouragement which boosts their confidence and enhances their self esteem. They receive opportunities to learn to manage their own behaviour and respond well to the use of supported negotiation and the use of a sand timer. Most children form positive attitudes because they are offered explanations which are in line with their level of understanding. This in turn helps them to distinguish the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Parents and carers are provided with information which is clear and well presented. In addition to the notice board and information in the prospectus, open evenings are organised to provide opportunities for parents and carers to discuss their child's progress and learn more about the curriculum and the role of the key-worker. Parents have some input in their child's learning as they are encouraged to bring items from home to support the group's theme, for example, tactile objects.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Children benefit from the nursery providing parents/carers opportunities to attend a 'come and play day' which is organised to impart information in a practical way regarding the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning. The well-managed displays show the six areas of learning and planning which further helps parents to gain a better understanding. The system to share children's individual learning priorities with their parents is working well.

Children explore other cultures and beliefs through planned activities and discussions. They play cooperatively together sharing toys and resources. Children are developing an awareness of their own needs and the needs of others helping them to form positive relationships with their peers. Children are kind and thoughtful to each other as they help one another to put on their coats or pour their drinks. All children have access to toys and resources which support their personal progress well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Regulatory policies and procedures are in place and up-dated as required. However, the current system for recording the arrival and departure times of staff and children are not kept consistently to ensure that staff and children are safely accounted for at all times. Robust vetting systems are in place to ensure that children are protected. There is a clear operational plan that staff work to and all required records for children are in place. Although the relevant documentation is in place and easily accessible, a few procedures are yet to include all the required information.

Children are secure in an environment which fosters independence. They are cared for by experienced and qualified staff who work effectively to ensure their welfare and development.

The available space is used flexibly for different age groups and in line with the needs of children. All staff working with children are using the Foundation Stage curriculum and some are also using the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning for the needs of younger children. Monitoring systems are in place such as, staff induction and appraisals which support new and existing members of staff. Policies and procedures are implemented in practice to promote positive outcomes for children.

The leadership and management for funded children is good. There is a strong commitment to improvement throughout the team which is instigated by the manager. Staff are enthusiastic and their skills and experiences are recognised and valued. Therefore, they are keen to continually update their knowledge by regularly attending a variety of training and some are also working towards recognised childcare qualifications. As a result, children benefit from improved childcare practice. Staff show a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and have the support of other professional organisations and the local authority to develop the quality of nursery education. There are good systems in place for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the nursery education and the overall running of the nursery. As a result, the manager is aware of the setting's strengths and weaknesses which assists in its future development in order to make a positive difference to the children in their care. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The setting has made some significant improvement in meeting the recommendations raised at the last inspection which has resulted in a positive impact on the overall care and education for the children attending. Children are well supported by staff in their learning as a result they learn and progress through play effectively. There are also more opportunities during planned and spontaneous activities for children to practice calculation and they benefit from consistently hearing mathematical language which they successfully repeat to describe, colour, size, length and quantity. Gaps in children's learning have been partially identified and activities are planned effectively to support children's individual learning needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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):

- review procedures for registration and medication to ensure all required information is recorded.

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):

- continue to develop systems for observation and record keeping to ensure children make progress across all six areas of learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk