



Daisy Chain Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251462
Inspection date	09 November 2006
Inspector	Gill Thornton
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Registered person	Daisy Chain Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Daisy Chain Pre-School is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the pre-school and members of the local community. It opened in 1974 and operates from a dedicated, newly converted room in part of a community education building situated on a residential estate in east Ipswich. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open from 08.45 to 11.45 Monday to Friday during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 25 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four staff, of these two hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group receives support from the Local Authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good health and hygiene practices through the regular routines of the session. For example, staff ensure children wash their hands thoroughly before snack time and give clear explanations about the need to wash away the germs. Staff obtain sufficient information from parents to ensure children's individual health care needs are met. Senior staff have attended first aid and food hygiene training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow to maintain children's health.

Children's dietary needs are met through the provision of a mid-morning snack that takes account of their individual dietary needs and preferences. Children usually have fruit or raw vegetables followed by a plain biscuit or they sometimes make jam sandwiches to have as a picnic. Children have a choice of milk or water at snack time and a jug of water is available during the session.

Children are developing a positive attitude to physical exercise. They are able to choose whether to play indoors or outside during the majority of each session. Children use their bodies in a variety of different ways as they run, crawl, balance use ride-on toys and take part in action rhymes. They develop their small physical skills through kneading and rolling play dough, using pencils, brushes and threading resources.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment, where staff take steps to minimise most risks. However, the kitchen door is not always securely closed to prevent children having unsupervised access, which puts them at possible risk from unsuitable items and equipment. Staff monitor children's arrival and departure and ensure the entrance door and outside gates are kept secure during the session to prevent unauthorised access and to keep children safe. The spacious outdoor area allows children freedom to play in safety.

Staff prepare the room before the children arrive and provide them with a reasonable range of safe and suitable toys and equipment which generally interest and motivate them. Children are able to move around freely and independently in the indoor and outdoor environment to access their preferred activities from those provided by staff. The required fire safety precautions are in place and staff practise emergency evacuations with the children so that they know what to do in the event of a fire.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because senior staff have attended child protection training to ensure they are aware of the procedures to follow if they have a concern. Their child protection statement is shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy coming to the setting. They generally part from their parents and carers confidently or are supported by staff to do so and soon settle at an activity. Children make good relationships with each other and look forward to seeing their friends, for example, during registration they called out to welcome a child who was late. Most children are generally involved in a reasonable range of play opportunities which sufficiently interest them. However, these are not always fully supported by appropriate resources or staff interaction to motivate them and provide appropriate challenge. Children are familiar with the routines of the session, however, at times of transition some children are not purposefully engaged and are just waiting for staff to be available to interact and support them. For example, while tidying up before snack time and story time.

The group have not yet taken account of 'Birth to three matters' in their practice with younger children. Staff informally adapt some activities for the under threes and the group are in the process of reviewing the use of key workers for this age group. However, children under three are sometimes not fully supported or included during whole group activities such as story time or registration to encourage their participation.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Teaching is generally appropriate for the children attending. Staff have an adequate understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn to provide a sufficient range of activities and play opportunities based on the six areas of learning. Staff use a reasonable range of teaching methods and interact with children during their play. However, on occasion they do not respond appropriately to the children's interests and their use of questioning skills does not fully support children's learning. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to provide children with appropriate challenge to help them make progress, particularly with regard to mathematical development and linking sounds to letters.

The group are currently developing their planning with guidance from the Early Education Support Teacher. Long term planning is usually balanced across the six areas of learning, with weekly play provision identified to show different activities. However, there is no separate play provision shown to support mathematical development, consequently this area is not fully promoted. In addition, planning is not necessarily reflected in the actual learning environment and does not identify the intended learning in everyday activities. Consequently, staff do not always recognise learning opportunities or make the most of the available resources to promote children's learning and help them make progress.

Staff are in the process of establishing a system of recording children's progress through the stepping stones using brief observations and highlighting the stepping stones identified in planning. They have yet to fully implement a system of identifying children's next step in learning to inform future planning. Weekly evaluation sheets are used to identify areas for development for the following week.

Children are developing their self-care skills, they are able to access the toilet independently and staff praise their attempts to put on their own coats. Children are encouraged to pour their own drinks at snack time and staff sit and chat with children about their families which promotes their sense of community. Older children are confident communicators, they contribute and offer their own ideas at group time, although this is not always managed in a way that gives all children the opportunity to speak.

Most children enjoy group story time and they often ask for more than one story. Few children access the book area during the session and they receive limited staff support to encourage their interest in books. Children find named picture cards during registration, but there is no progression to recognise their own names and identify initial letter sounds. Children regularly practise their mark making skills using pens and felt tips pens and have some opportunities to experiment with writing for a purpose in the role play area. For example, recording 'who was poorly at the hospital'. However, staff automatically name children's work and paintings without encouraging them to attempt to do it for themselves.

Children use mathematical language such as big and small during their play and count by rote at circle time. They have some opportunity to recognise numerals while doing a number puzzle but have access to very few other mathematical resources. They take part in number rhymes such as 'Ten Currant Buns' using props and enthusiastically join in with 'Ten Fat Sausages' with some children responding to 'how many left?'.

Children enjoy using the computer to develop their mouse skills and use everyday technology such as mobile phones during their play. They are curious to explore textures, for example, investigating the properties of cornflour mixed with water. Children use their imagination during planned role play situations, for example, a well resourced hospital encouraged children's enjoyment and participation. Creative activities are often adult led, but staff recognise the importance of allowing children to explore their creativity and make some provision for this. For example, decorating paper leaves with a range of media allows children to become engrossed in exploring their own ideas. Children are generally making sufficient progress given their capabilities and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the group and displays of their artwork help them develop a sense of belonging, for example, one child excitedly pointed out their paper plate face on arrival. Staff respect children's individuality and ensure they have access to toys and equipment to meet their individual needs. Appropriate procedures are in place to support children with additional needs. Children with English as an additional language settle well and are encouraged to interact with the other children.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are developing confidence and self-esteem and are beginning to develop an understanding of the needs of others. Children generally manage their behaviour appropriately and receive adequate support from staff to share popular resources. Most children know to help at tidy up and they are beginning to gain some understanding of right and wrong.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Most documentation and consents are in place to ensure children are looked after according to their parents wishes and information is shared verbally to ensure children's changing needs are met. A complaints policy is in place, however, it has not been updated to reflect current regulations to ensure parents and staff work together to promote children's welfare.

Parents receive information about the running of the provision via the prospectus and operational policies and procedures are available for parents to share. Notice boards and newsletters provide parents with further information, including half termly themes and suggestions of items for the children to bring in to share with the group. However, they receive very little information about the Foundation Stage and there are no procedures in place to encourage parents to share and contribute to their children's records of progress. Consequently, parents have little opportunity to become actively involved in their children's learning. Parents are generally pleased with the provision and comment on how their children enjoy coming each day and that they can see the progress they have made.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by suitable staff with a reasonable knowledge and understanding of how children learn. However, clear appointment, recruitment and induction procedures are not in place for new staff to ensure their suitability and to reflect current regulations. Minimum qualification requirements and the required adult to child ratios are met. Staff are satisfactorily deployed for most of the session, however, sometimes tidying up takes priority over supporting and interacting with the children to fully promote their development. Space and resources are organised adequately to allow children to move around freely and independently.

Most policies and procedures generally work in practice to promote children's health, welfare and development. There is an appropriate system in place for registering children, staff attendance and the required records are maintained and stored confidentially. Overall, the range of children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is satisfactory.

The group have just been awarded a substantial grant to improve the range of toys and equipment available to support children's care, learning and play. Staff are developing their knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and how to apply this in their practice to support children's development. Informal staff meetings involve all staff in planning activities and completing weekly evaluation sheets to identify further areas for development.

The support teacher helps monitor the provision of nursery education and is providing continual support to the staff team to help them continue to improve the care and education provided.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection the group agreed to improve documentation regarding accident and medication records and to update operational policies and procedures. The required documents are now in place and most operational policies have been reviewed to enhance children's care and welfare. They were also asked to improve some safety issues, including conducting risk assessments and preventing children's access to the kitchen. Regular risk assessments are now undertaken, however, appropriate steps have not been taken to prevent children's access to the kitchen and this remains an area for improvement.

In addition, recommendations were made with regard to improving staff's knowledge and understanding of behaviour management strategies and ensuring the minimum qualification requirements were met during staff absences. Staff have received in-house training on managing children's behaviour and they discuss strategies during staff meetings to ensure consistency of approach. Another member of staff has just applied to do her NVQ Level 2 to improve the care provided.

The nursery education inspection set key issues relating to developing staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and improving planning. Staff have received in-house training on the Foundation Stage and they each have a copy of the Curriculum guidance for their own reference. They are acting upon advice received from the support teacher to develop a new planning system, however, this is still being implemented and remains a continued area for development.

They also agreed to establish a system of monitoring children's progress towards the early learning goals which is used to plan their next step in learning. Again staff have been working with the support teacher to develop children's records of progress using brief observations and highlighting their progress through the stepping stones. This is still to be firmly established and remains an ongoing area for development. They were also asked to monitor and evaluate the provision of nursery education, and again have received advice from the support teacher to establish a system of weekly evaluations to identify areas for development to improve the provision of nursery education.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- ensure children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen
- improve outcomes for children under three by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters'
- ensure the complaints policy is updated to reflect current regulations
- ensure clear recruitment, appointment and induction procedures are in place for new staff reflecting current regulations.

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):

- review the organisation of the session to ensure children receive appropriate staff support and choice of play opportunities and resources to motivate them and provide appropriate challenge (also applies to care)
- continue to develop planning to ensure balance across aspects within each of the six areas of learning and that it is reflected in practice during each session
- continue to develop the learning environment and identify intended learning in everyday activities ensuring this is supported by available resources and staff
- continue to develop children's records of progress towards the early learning goals to identify children's next step in learning and include in future planning
- provide parents with information on the Foundation Stage and devise and implement a system of encouraging parents to share and contribute to their children's records of progress.

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