



The Dove Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY321567
Inspection date	26 September 2006
Inspector	Michelle Smith
Setting Address	c/o Dovecotes Primary School, Ryefield, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV8 1TX
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Registered person	Dovecotes Primary School
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care, Crèche

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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Dove Centre opened in 2006. It operates from premises on the site of Dovecotes Primary School in Pendeford, Wolverhampton. A maximum of 53 children may attend the centre at any one time. It is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 23 children aged from four months to under 12 years on roll. This includes children who receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The centre support children with learning difficulties and / or disabilities.

The centre employs 25 members of staff, 14 of which hold an early years qualification. There are 10 staff members who are working towards a qualification and six who are extending their qualification base. Fourteen staff members work directly with the children.

The Dove Centre operates as a Children's Centre and as such provides additional services to parents and carers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children complete routine hygiene tasks with enthusiasm. They concentrate as they wash their hands using soap and enjoy switching on the themed taps. They become increasingly independent as staff guide them to place their paper towels in the bin and to pull up their own clothes after toileting. Children are well protected from the spread of infection. Staff follow routine hygiene procedures, such as nappy changing consistently. Their good health is safeguarded in emergency situations. Consent is gained from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and there is always a minimum of one first aid trained staff member at the centre at any one time. All accidents are recorded and written records are kept regarding medication. However, parents do not always sign the record books to acknowledge the entry. This reduces children's good health overall.

Children benefit from a healthy and nutritious diet. All food is freshly prepared at the centre by an experienced and knowledgeable cook. The large majority of children eat fresh vegetables and a wealth of fruit throughout the day. However, children who attend the setting after school hours do not have easy access to the full range of healthy options. This reduces the nutritional value of the snacks they receive. Children eat at their own pace, with babies being fed according to their individual routine. An inclusive environment is provided for children with special dietary needs, such as dairy free. As a result of the centre's proactive approach to food, most children are developing a positive approach to healthy eating.

Children enjoy daily access to fresh air and exercise. They choose if they wish to play indoors or outside as the doors remain open, weather permitting. Children thrive on the challenge of climbing into a wooden sea-saw and develop increasing control of their small skills as they paint with water. More able children coordinate their movements well and they jump up and down whilst playing with bubble wrap and pop individual bubbles with their fingers. All children play imaginatively and have fun outdoors, for example, when sitting inside a tent singing songs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in the welcoming environment. Photographs of them taking part in activities are displayed at their height which helps them to talk about recent experiences and values their work. They are comfortable in the centre and settle with ease as they arrive. The temperature of the rooms is maintained appropriately, ensuring they are warm or cool enough. Children have very easy access to resources which are stored safely. They are able to reach and choose what they would like to play through effective storage solutions. They have sufficient space to move freely around equipment and resources are plentiful.

Children are safe both indoors and outside. They are protected from unknown persons as the centre is secure and access to the children is closely monitored. Children are free to enjoy their play as staff have high regard for their safety and supervise them directly to identify any hazards quickly. Children are learning to keep themselves safe as staff give them logical and gentle explanations. For example, they discourage children from sitting on the book unit, telling them that they could easily hurt themselves and get their legs stuck. Children respond well. Staff carry out routine escape drills and demonstrate good awareness of how they would react in emergency situations. This safeguards children's well-being.

Children are protected from possible abuse or neglect because staff have a consistent approach to child protection issues. They are aware of the importance of sharing any concerns they may have with the management team and inform parents and carers of their duty to protect all children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in a diverse range of freely accessible activities which they find interesting and enjoyable. They are enthusiastic about the activities offered and have much fun as they take part in, for example, playing with tin foil. Young babies enjoy experimenting with textures and images. They touch, feel and explore objects, such as a wooden activity centre with curiosity. Children join in with lots of laughter and giggles as they play parachute games with other staff and their peers. They thrive on the close relationships they hold with staff, sitting on their knee to listen to a story and playing excitedly with bubble wrap. Children make reasonable choices as they play. During creative activities they paint their fingers and hands making hand prints and maximising the full sensory experience. They show increasing levels of independence as they move freely between activities, following their own ideas and building on their natural curiosity. Outdoor play is enjoyed by all. Children march around in their Wellington boots and push dolls in pushchairs. They learn to push and pull objects such as bikes and make up their own games.

All staff members understand the 'Birth to three matters' framework and implement it successfully to inspire children to learn. They interact consistently well with all children, talking with them as they play and role modelling ideas, such as painting on the decking. Children relish the time they spend with them. They sing confidently as they wait for their lunch to be served and approach staff freely when they need support or reassurance. Staff blend learning opportunities into everyday meaningful activities, such as helping children to understand the words 'up' and 'down' as they play outdoor games. Children are becoming skilful communicators as they listen and respond to their senses.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected. Their individual needs are identified and met through a wide range of methods including verbal discussions with parents and carers and written information. Through effective staff deployment and an established key person system staff know the

children well. This helps them to settle and to develop a sense of belonging. The needs of babies are accommodated well. They receive close individual care, such as being held by a consistent staff team whilst being bottle fed. A designated staff member makes sure the centre implements the equal opportunities policy successfully. Children learn about their own culture and the beliefs of others through practical meaningful activities, such as celebrating Diwali and tasting food originating from other countries. Staff take the time to understand the needs of children with learning difficulties and / or disabilities making sure an inclusive environment is provided. As a result, all children can take part in all activities.

Staff use clear and consistent strategies to manage children's behaviour. They are calm and logical in their approach, offering children reasonable explanations and supporting their safe care well. Children are familiar with the boundaries of the group, for example, after lunch they know it is rest time. They respond well to staff instructions when needed, for example, putting on their sand hat and behave well. Children are polite and use their manners well, for example, saying "thank you" when given lunch.

Children benefit from friendly relationships between staff, parents and carers. Most systems enhance this relationship, for example, a full portfolio of policies is displayed. However, the range of methods used to share written activity plans with parents and carers is limited. This reduces the parent's and carer's ability to further activities at home. Children's developmental progress is shared through daily discussions and a diary sheet which they take home each day. The consistency in which information is shared means that children can relax and enjoy their day.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff have high regard for all children's well-being. There are effective recruitment and vetting procedures which make sure all staff are suitable to work with children, for example police checks and written references. The centre places a strong emphasis on staff training and development. This broadens children's horizons and provides them with continuity of care as good practice is shared. Staff understand their job roles and work well as a team to ensure children are making good developmental progress. Some staff members take on additional responsibility, such as 'behaviour management' or 'equal opportunities'. The large majority of documents are in place to aid the smooth running of the centre, for example, accurate records of children's attendance are maintained.

Staff are deployed effectively. They are in the right place at the right time to support children's ideas. They use their time wisely which means they spend the large majority of their time working directly with the children. Children gain confidence in the centre as they belong to a key person and an established room base. They take part in a full range of diverse and interesting activities as space and resources are used with their best care in mind.

Overall, the needs of the range of children cared for are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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.

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 parents always sign the accident and medication records to acknowledge any entries
- extend the range of methods used to provide parents with free access to written activity plans
- provide out of school children with a greater range of healthy snacks.

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