



Charminster Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337568
Inspection date	24 January 2007
Inspector	Brenda Joan Flewitt
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Registered person	Charminster Pre-School
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?

Charminster Pre-school re-registered in new premises in 2006, having previously operated for 35 years. It is a committee run group, operating from purpose built premises within the grounds of St Mary's Church of England School in Charminster, near Dorchester, Dorset. Children have use of a play room, with toilet facilities leading directly off this. There is a fully enclosed outside play area. The pre-school opens each weekday during term time, from 09.00 to 15.00.

A maximum of 34 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 50 children on roll. Of these 39 receive funding for early education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties.

Including the manager, who holds a teaching qualification, there are six staff employed. They all hold a relevant child care qualification. The setting receives advice and support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's healthy lifestyle is promoted well. They are cared for in new and clean premises where staff are consistent in carrying out good practices to maintain a hygienic environment and help prevent the spread of infection. For example, staff use protective gloves when changing nappies, and clean tables with anti-bacterial cleaner before food activities. There is a clear sickness policy which is shared with parents to ensure that children do not attend if they have an infectious illness. Children learn good routines for their own personal hygiene. They easily access the toilets and hand washing facilities, developing independence in using the equipment, which includes liquid soap and paper towels. They learn that hands must be clean before handling food, as staff encourage them to wash their hands before cooking activities, and provide individual wet-wipes for children to use as they sit down for snack time.

Children are learning to make healthy choices at snack and meal times. They are offered a nutritious snack consisting of a selection of fruit, and sometimes food linked to a topic. For example, children practised using one-handed tools as they buttered bread to make sandwiches, and poured their own milk or water. They chose from honey or marmalade and were encouraged to think which 'bear' ate marmalade sandwiches. The setting provides useful information to parents to promote healthy eating with suggestions for options to include in lunch boxes. Children help themselves to a drink of water when they are thirsty at other times, as resources are made easily accessible on a low-level trolley. Children's dietary requirements and parents' preferences are recorded and respected. Children get fresh air and exercise each day because an outside activity is always planned. They take turns to use the outside area in small groups where they balance on beams, run, jump and climb, which helps develop large muscle skills.

Children's medication and accidents are well managed. Most staff have up-to-date training in first aid, and first aiders are clearly identified each day. First aid resources are stored safely and easily accessible. The relevant records are completed clearly.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and learn in a bright and welcoming environment which is safe and secure. Staff carry out regular risk assessments to ensure that hazards are identified and minimised. They put measures in place to help prevent accidents, such as socket covers, door wedges to help prevent trapped fingers, and the safe storage of hazardous substances. The effective security system makes sure that children are protected from uninvited visitors and that they cannot leave the building unsupervised.

The space available is well organised so that children move around in safety as they choose their activities and during their play. They are reminded to move in ways that promote safety, for example walking, not running. The room is arranged into various areas of play and learning including a book area, messy play area, role play, and table top activities like puzzles, construction, and mark-making. Children use a good range of well maintained play provision and there is ample low-level furniture for them to sit together for lunch and snack time.

There are clear procedures for leaving the building in an emergency. Fire exits are clearly marked, and staff are sure about their roles and responsibilities in keeping the children safe. Although fire drills are carried out involving the children, and they have listened to the noise of the alarm, not all children attending have taken part in practising the procedure. Therefore, they do not know what is expected in a real situation.

Children are kept safe on outings through staff's routine procedures which include increasing adult-to-child ratio, carrying out risk assessments, and making sure that first aid resources and contact numbers are readily available. Children learn about how to stay safe through discussion and good example set by the adults. For example, they practise safe routines for crossing roads and are required to hold hands when walking.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding children which includes recognising signs of abuse and the procedures to follow with concerns. Supervisory staff have recently attended training and there is information for reference readily available. This contributes towards keeping children safe from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and secure. They enjoy the time they spend at pre-school and make good relationships with staff and each other. They are cared for in a calm, yet busy and stimulating environment where they are encouraged to respect each other. Children are confident to make their needs known, as they can be sure of a friendly and caring response. They are developing good independence skills in practical tasks such as using hand washing facilities, pouring their own drinks and managing their own clothing.

Children take part in a broad range of experiences that promote their learning in all areas of development. They enjoy a good balance of self-selected and adult-led activities. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn through play. Therefore, children enjoy positive interaction from the adults who work with them as they support their activities and help them understand the world around them. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework effectively to help assess the younger children's stage of development, which provides a good picture of their starting points as they begin the Foundation Stage.

Children use a good range of play provision and resources which are thoughtfully organised to encourage them to select for themselves. For example a three-year-old decides to paint a picture, she finds an overall and asks an adult to help her fasten it, she selects a piece of paper and confidently secures it to the easel herself, using magnetic strips, before starting to paint. The low-level storage is clearly labelled using words and pictures to enable both staff and

children to easily see what is contained in the boxes. Staff arrange areas linked to topics which capture children's interest. For example, the role play area is changed frequently to reflect the theme such as a book shop during the topic of 'Stories'.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure working knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this to plan interesting activities that promote children's development, clearly linked to the six areas of learning. They make regular observations of children's achievements and use these to inform an effective assessment system that identifies each child's stage in the stepping stones. This is then used to plan the next step. Therefore, children are making good progress in their learning.

Staff create an environment where children focus well on tasks and complete them to their own satisfaction. Staff link themes and topics effectively to cover many areas of learning within one activity, using resources well to capture children's interest. For example, children are fascinated as they open up a box made to look like 'the three bear's cottage'. They find a miniature china tea set, a child proceeds to use his imagination to make a 'cup of tea', and knows that he must treat the items carefully or they will break. Another child investigates what is in the box marked 'b'; on finding a butterfly, he tells an adult about how he saw a butterfly on a gate when he was on holiday in Cornwall. A group of children count small, medium and large chairs, beds and bears and enjoy acting out the story of 'Goldilocks' using the props.

Children develop a good sense of number as they regularly count everyday items or people, and staff often refer to a number of items during children's play and everyday routine. For example, children count how many children are present in a group, and a four-year-old correctly identifies a £1 coin while playing in the shop. Children learn about space, shape and measure through planned adult-led activities and general conversation with staff who help confirm children's understanding by relating mathematical language to everyday situations. Children use language well to communicate, many are confident to initiate conversations with adults and each other. Meal times are sociable events when children sit around tables with a member staff and enjoy chatting about events in their lives, as well as recalling what they have learnt during previous activities. They learn good manners and what is expected, while learning practical skills such as opening packets.

Children start to recognise their own written name through the every day routine of self-registration, and finding their own coat peg. They practise skills for writing as they carry out tasks using one-handed tools such as paintbrushes, pencils and chinks and have daily opportunities for mark making. However, they are not always encouraged to transfer this to real life situations like naming their own work. Children enjoy stories in a group. They listen well and like to join in familiar phases or predict what is going to happen. They enjoy singing familiar songs and join in the corresponding actions, making intended movements. For instance, while singing 'head, shoulders, knees and toes', they competently touch the correct part of their bodies. Children use a wide range of large and small equipment and tools to develop muscle skills. The outside area is being developed to include all areas of learning and provide opportunities for children to manoeuvre vehicles, which at present is limited.

Children use their senses to explore and investigate through a wide variety of activities. They express their ideas through art work and construction. They have opportunities for messy play on a daily basis. Children enjoy manipulating dough into specific shapes. For example, they roll the dough flat using rolling pins, then cut out a shape of 'Goldilocks' and 'baby bear' with cutters. A cooking activity encourages children to notice and describe changes as water is added to 'dry' oats and then heated to make porridge. One child calls the wet oats, 'slimy'. Children are gaining a good sense of time and place. They discuss days, dates and weather on a daily basis as they look at the calendar. They take part in walks in the village where they look at various features of buildings including shapes, numbers and different types of roof.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave very well. They know the routine and what is expected. Staff use quiet calm voices to express requests, offering explanations particularly linked to safety. Children respond well to prior warning of change of activity. For example, staff shake a tambourine to indicate that children must stop and listen, they explain that there is one minute left before tidying up time. Children help pack away equipment. Children receive much praise and encouragement from staff for their efforts and achievements, which helps build their self-esteem.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging and being part of a community. They see pictures of themselves and their work displayed in the pre-school and are made to feel special on their birthday as their friends sing to them. Children choose books to borrow and take home to share with their families. They are invited to attend school performances and events such as the Christmas play and harvest celebration. Children with special needs are well supported. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) attends on-going training to develop her knowledge. She liaises effectively with parents, staff and outside agencies to ensure that all children are fully included. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are supplied with comprehensive information about the setting which includes a prospectus with details about staff, committee, routines and curriculum. There are regular newsletters which inform parents about events, new children, and topics. Parents have the opportunity to be a member of the management committee which enables them to have an active voice in their child's care and education. Parents are well informed about their child's progress. They can see the records at any time by request and are invited to parents' evenings or afternoons to discuss these with their child's key worker. Children benefit from on-going verbal communication between parents and staff which contributes towards meeting individual needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a qualified and experienced team of staff who work well together. They are well organised and prepared before children arrive for each session. They have clear roles and responsibilities and carry out procedures outlined in policies to promote children's safety, welfare and learning. This leads to smoothly run sessions where children know what to

expect. This results in them settling quickly, focusing well and enjoying their time at the setting. There are good procedures in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and a clear induction policy so that new staff are well informed about their responsibilities in caring for children. However, fire drills are not always practised frequently enough to include every child. All the required documentation and records are in place, stored confidentially and completed clearly. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. The committee and staff have clear aims for developing the provision for children's care and education further. For example, they are liaising with local authority advisors with regard to extending the outside play area. There are effective systems in place to support staff in developing their roles through training. Annual staff appraisals help identify any training needs or personal development. There are strong links with the school, which includes visits to the reception class for children due to transfer. This helps children's transition from pre-school to school and helps them settle.

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 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):

- make sure that all children are involved in practising emergency evacuation procedures, so that they know what is expected in a real situation.

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):

- increase children's opportunities to practise writing for a purpose.

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