



Dalton Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	134534
Inspection date	16 March 2007
Inspector	Janet Maria Moutter
Setting Address	Block 104, Dalton Barracks, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX13 6HG
Telephone number	01235 543640
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Registered person	Dalton Pre-School Nursery
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?

Dalton Pre-School Nursery was established in 1993 and is managed by a committee made up of staff, parents and army personnel. The nursery operates from accommodation on the Dalton Barracks, close to the town of Abingdon. The group have the use of a unit that consists of two large playrooms, kitchen, office and toilet facilities. There is access to an enclosed outdoor play area. Most children attending have parents serving in the armed forces.

The nursery opens on weekdays during school term times, from 08.00 to 17.00. A play scheme operates in the school holidays for children up to eight years. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 50 children on roll, of which 26 are receiving nursery education funding. Staff provide support for a number of children with special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 staff of which the manager, house keeper and trainee are counted at certain times of the day. Of that total seven staff have appropriate early years qualifications, two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about effective personal hygiene practices. They listen carefully to instructions from staff about correctly washing their hands, drying them and disposing of tissues and paper towels. Children demonstrate these skills by independently using the resources and equipment available to them, such as soap, low level sinks, low level toilets and paper towels. Good hygiene practices are followed by all staff and students, such as using appropriate cloths to clean spillages and prepare surfaces for eating, therefore preventing cross-infection. Children who are ill during their time at the nursery are dealt with quickly and sensitively through the use of an effective sick child policy.

Children increase their awareness of good nutrition through the healthy snacks they enjoy whilst in the provision. Allergies or parental wishes are discussed as part of the registration process. These discussions are recorded and any needs met. Children are encouraged to try new snack options, such as prawn crackers and noodles, as part of the topic on Chinese New Year and thus increase their awareness of food tastes. Children are able to ask for freshly poured drinking water from the kitchen, which helps to ensure they are consuming fluids in sufficient quantities to meet their differing requirements.

Children have plentiful opportunities to participate in physical activities, although these are mainly adult led, involving music and movement and the use of various outside equipment, such as new bikes, trampolines, stilts and climbing equipment on the large grassed area to the side of the provision. Both groups of children use outdoor provision such as the playground on a daily basis, usually within a set time to allow the space to be shared. The two groups are the nursery and the pre-school.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a very safe and secure environment which promotes children's independent play. Excellent security measures are in place within the nursery to ensure children are not able to leave the premises unaccompanied. The premises are clean, suitably maintained and of an appropriate temperature. Colourful posters and artwork create welcoming displays for parents. Children are able to visit the toilet independently, which helps them to develop their confidence and self-assurance whilst in the setting. Children benefit from the range of measures that are in place to support their safety and help prevent accidents. For example, staff make sure children are unable to access the kitchen, socket covers are fitted to exposed electric points and heaters are protected. Children are learning to share responsibility for their safety through activities, such as tidying away toys or taking part in fire drills. Children accomplish a clear understanding of their own and other people's safety. They receive appropriate explanations about keeping

safe with excellent examples from staff about people who can help them and those who are safe to approach, such as police officers or military police in uniform. Children learn about the impact their actions have on other people such as walking through activities and treading on other children's fingers.

Children enjoy self-selecting from a wide range of age appropriate resources that are well displayed on low-level shelving units. Such free choice opportunities help children to gain confidence and a sense of belonging within the group. They benefit from the staffs' good understanding of safety issues concerning the purchase and ongoing maintenance of equipment. As a result, children play with clean, well-maintained toys that are safe, suitable and help to support their development.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by a staffing team that has a very secure knowledge of child protection issues, confidentiality of information and the correct procedures to follow if concerned about a child. There are effective arrangements for making sure parents understand the provider's child protection responsibilities, prior to a child commencing in the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily into the setting and develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem. They settle very quickly into the friendly environment of the nursery routine, through the sensitive care and management of staff members. Children have a good relationship with staff. Young children are given lots of cuddles and reassurance when unsettled. As a result, they are helped to feel well supported and secure, with the ability to snuggle into staff when necessary.

Young children are introduced to a range of activities which extend their learning. The detailed plans and recording of information enables staff to monitor young children's development around the Birth to three matters framework. Young children make independent choices regarding the activities and resources they wish to explore. For example, some children wish to take part in imaginative play or have a story read to them, while others enjoy playing in jelly or with the corn flour play.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most children are progressing well given their starting points and capabilities. They are supported by the staff teams confidence and knowledge of the early years curriculum. They have a clear understanding of what children are intended to learn from the activities. Staff meet regularly to plan a varied range of activities to support children's learning towards the early learning goals. Planning is comprehensive and covers all areas of learning. Staff work well together and are committed to on going professional development which enhances children's learning experiences.

Staff know the children well and have positive relationships with them. They are consistently deployed to support children's learning. Staff are gifted in appropriate questioning of children in order to make them think and extend their knowledge. Staff gently ask questions in order to increase children's thinking. Written observations are completed by staff which are used to

support children's assessments. However, the resources and materials available at each session planned activities are adult led. There are limited opportunities for children to express and internalise what they have learned by creativity such as 3D modelling, imagination such as dressing up and exploratory impulses such as to make music, to extend their learning.

Children show a sense of belonging as they greet each other on arrival. They are fully involved in play and activities throughout the sessions. Children have a good level of independence as they freely select equipment for themselves and take responsibility for their personal care. Children show concern for each other and enjoy meeting with younger children throughout the day. As a result, children benefit from being part of a family environment within the nursery setting.

Children are confident in their use of numbers and are able to count up to ten and some beyond. There are planned activities each session such as playing sequencing and matching games with a small group and the children are keen and staff help them to remain stimulated and involved. They enjoy story telling and treat books with respect by handling them appropriately. Children are able to freely access computer programmes and effectively use the mouse. They take turns sharing the computer and readily using a timer to monitor their time on various play equipment. Children work together as a team while creating a gingerbread man from card and paper, followed by painting the finished wall display as part of the 'nursery rhyme' theme.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals and fully included into the setting. Continuity of care is managed well within the small intimate pre-school nursery. Daily contact sheets are used to give to parents and staff to keep all informed of the baby room children's care. However, there is no permanent system of recording each child's daily routine so that each member of staff can ensure the two-way communication with parents to meet the needs of the children which is shared by all staff. The care of children with learning difficulties is well organised.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are independent and show good self-care skills while others follow the good example shown by staff. They thoroughly enjoy sharing news about significant moments in their lives with others. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of the wider world around them as they meet other children and their families and share their play. Children have a good range of well used books, and play resources that show positive images of diversity.

Children behave well in the setting. Young children are encouraged to share toys through positive gentle management by staff. Children understand right from wrong through boundaries and lots of praise from staff who are good role models.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit greatly from the open warm welcome that families receive. Information is shared verbally, and formally through family days where staff spend the evening detailing young children's time spent in the pre-school. Staff are highly motivated in making sure that children settle into the pre-school as easily as possible. This includes a slow induction at the child's pace. Parents are encouraged to be part of their children's

learning through a variety of ways, such as by joining the parent rota, sharing their skills or helping their child to bring in articles from home linked to the theme. They are aware of their access to their child's assessment records and have half yearly planned opportunities to review and discuss children's academic progress.

All parents are given extensive information about the setting. This includes information relating to the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage. Parents receive a regular news letter giving information about the nursery. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress at all times with the staff. As a result, the good relationship between the pre-school and parents fully supports all children's developing self-assurance and aids towards building a consistent approach to children's care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care and education.

Children's well-being and education is supported by staff that are qualified and experienced. Young children receive quality time as they are cared for in small groups. There is a thorough operational plan which is effective in practice, therefore ensuring that sessions run smoothly and children benefit from stable routines' within a pre-school environment.

Leadership and management are good.

Staff work efficiently and effectively together and compliment each other's skills. They work together as a team and meet regularly to discuss planning and children's progress. The manager is experienced and qualified which is an asset to the setting, providing examples of good practice. This includes appropriate methods of recruiting staff and regular meetings to identify training requirements, which enhances a good range of experiences for children. However, there are times through out the day when children are distracted and more planned activities so that children are engaged, calm and relaxed ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

Clear policies and procedures support staff in working successfully in partnership with parents. Regular self-assessment and monitoring by the manager and room leaders ensures that children receive good levels of care and education. As a result, children needs are at the centre of the pre-school's aims. The staff have plans to further improve their monitoring and recording of children's needs as this is an evolving issue as the staff get more experience of using the Foundation Stage early learning goals and Birth to three matters framework.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the previous inspection, the pre-school nursery was required to address three recommendations relating to children's safety and quality of care with regards to documentation and information given to parents. Under nursery education they were asked to make the book area more inviting for the children. All these issues have been addressed successfully with the result that children now have up to date medication records and any particular needs are met.

The staff have the registration certificate clearly displayed and also the name and address of the regulator. As a result the partnership with parents has been strengthened. The book corner is now a popular well used area. All this has improved the quality of education and care offered to the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 1 2004, Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 2: Organisation. A concern was raised regarding staffing ratios and Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to investigate. Two actions were set to cover National Standard 1 and 2. Ofsted received a response from the provider which confirmed the action taken. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at this time. The investigation was closed.

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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):

- devise and maintain a system of two way communication with parents to meet the needs of the children and record their routines.

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):

- provide appropriate activities so that children are not distracted while other children are being collected this applies to both care and nursery education
- expand the resources and materials available at planned activities to engage children's creativity, imagination and exploratory impulses to extend their 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