

The Barn Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	144321
Inspection date	07 June 2007
Inspector	Carole Argles
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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?

The Barn Nursery was established over 30 years ago and is privately owned. It operates from dedicated playrooms within the owner's home which is situated on the family farm between Ferndown and Wimborne in Dorset. There is an enclosed area for outside play. Most of the children who attend live in the local area.

Currently there are 41 children aged from two to four years on roll, of whom 30 receive funding for nursery education. At present, there are no children who have learning difficulties or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery usually open four days a week during term time. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday sessions operate from 09.00 to 12.00. Children may stay for lunch on Tuesday and Thursday followed by an afternoon session from 12.45 to 15.15. Fledglings, a group for younger children, operates on Wednesday from 13.00 to 15.00, and on Monday afternoons according to demand.

The owner and four members of staff work with the children, of whom three hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises, equipment and toys are kept clean and hygienic for the children to use. The staff have a satisfactory knowledge of how to reduce the risk of infection spreading between children. Children who are ill or infectious do not attend the nursery; suitable nappy changing procedures are in place and the tables are wiped before snack and meal times. However, although paper towels are available, at times a shared cloth towel is used for hand drying. As there are no suitable paper towel dispensers, the children require assistance with hand drying. The children are beginning learn about the importance of good hygiene and know that they should wash their hands before eating. They help to wipe the tables and are reminded that they must not eat food that has fallen on the floor.

There are sound procedures in place to ensure that any required medication is administered safely to children and staff keep appropriate records of any accidents. Currently, several members of staff are renewing their first aid certificates and satisfactory first aid supplies are readily available. This contributes well to supporting the children's good health. However, parents have not been asked to give written consent for staff to seek medical treatment or advice for their child in the event of an emergency.

The children receive a nutritious mid-session snack which usually includes a variety of fresh or dried fruit as well as perhaps a rice cake or breadsticks. They have a choice of a drink of water or milk. Children are able to ask staff for an extra drink during the session but water is not readily available for them to take independently when they are thirsty. The children begin to learn about the importance of healthy eating through a range of activities. For example, they sampled a variety of exotic fruits during a theme on Africa and are helping to grow vegetables including runner beans and potatoes.

The children usually go outside to play daily and they bring boots to allow them to go out when the grass is wet. They enjoy running freely and playing with a wide range of equipment. Most children show good coordination and control of their movements as they climb, jump, pedal tricycles or swing on bars. They are developing a good sense of space, and enjoy pushing dolls in buggies and riding in wheeled toys around the larger equipment. They move safely around in the more confined space indoors. Staff help them to develop new skills, for instance, by holding the hand of a child who is less confident as he walks along a plank and by demonstrating how to jump in hoops. The children are encouraged to adopt an active lifestyle; they go for walks around the farmyard and are helped to take an interest in the natural world around them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are a welcoming and safe environment for the children who are settled and comfortable. The children mainly use dedicated playrooms within the provider's house and these are attractively decorated with many posters, interest tables and displays of their art work. Appropriate child-size furniture is provided, along with a wide range of toys and resources to support all areas of the children's learning and development. Many items are stored on low units and in boxes so that the children can see and select them without help and make choices about what they do. A cloakroom is located so that children can access it independently.

There are effective procedures in place to promote the children's safety and minimise the risk of accidental injury to them. The premises are kept secure and there are no obvious hazards in the areas the children use. Appropriate safety equipment, including socket covers and stairgates, is in place, and the children do not enter the kitchen. The children are well supervised at all times, especially when they are walking near the drive or playing outside. The toys and equipment are of good quality and safe and suitable for them to use. The children begin to learn how to keep themselves safe. As situations arise, the staff take opportunities to talk with them about safety issues, explaining the possible consequences of their actions so they understand why. For example, they remind them how to carry chairs properly and talk about why it is important not to touch insects such as bees. Appropriate fire safety procedures are in place and the children regularly practise the evacuation plan so they know how to act in an emergency.

The staff have a sound understanding of how to safeguard the children from harm. They know the signs that may indicate that a child is at risk and know what they must do if they are concerned about the welfare of a child in their care. There are robust procedures in place to ensure that children are only collected by authorised adults and staff supervise them closely at home times. This contributes effectively toward keeping the children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are happy, confident and relaxed at the nursery. Most children readily part from their carer and settle quickly at self-chosen activities. They form good relationships with staff and play cooperatively with other children. There is plenty of conversation and interaction between the children and the staff who ask them many open questions. This encourages the children to think and they are developing good communication skills. The children are grouped appropriately by age and ability and there is a suitable routine for all sessions.

The Fledgling sessions for the youngest children are less structured allowing them to gain confidence in the new experience of group care. They take part in a varied range of age-appropriate activities, including painting, pretend play and story-times. Staff monitor and assess their development, taking account of the Birth to three matters framework, and this helps them plan their progress towards the early learning goals effectively when they later receive funded nursery education.

The children make many choices about what they do and use. They are encouraged to develop independence, for example, helping to tidy up the toys, putting on their boots for outside play and the oldest children help to cut up fruit for their snack. Although the children can access the cloakrooms unsupervised, staff do not always encourage them to be independent in their personal care. The children develop a good self-esteem because they receive frequent encouragement and praise for their achievements. The staff are interested in them and talk with them about their homes and their families and value what they say. The children are well occupied at all times.

Nursery education

The quality of the teaching and learning is good and this ensures that the children are progressing well towards the early learning goals. The staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn. They communicate well with the children encouraging them to think and solve problems, and to express their own ideas and opinions. The children's progress and achievements are monitored closely. Staff use

this information to help them plan their future development and have begun to set individual termly targets for each child. This ensures that the activities are matched to the children's abilities. The staff devise an exciting programme for the children, taking account of their interests and consequently the children are keen to take part in the themed activities. In addition to this, the children have many opportunities to initiate their own play, selecting independently from a wide range of toys and resources which are kept within their reach. The staff take full advantage of unplanned events to extend the children's learning and interest. For example, they fetched bread for the children to feed to wild ducks that had unexpectedly arrived in the garden.

The children are motivated to learn and usually show sustained concentration on self-chosen and adult-led activities. They understand that there are times to sit quietly and show respect when others are talking. However, the routines of some group times, for example, 'show and tell' during the registration time and activities associated with the snack time, do not hold the interest and attention of all children. The children are confident speakers, initiating and taking turns in conversation with adults and their peers. Many children show a wide vocabulary and this is well supported by the staff through planned activities like a theme on opposites. Some children are beginning to consider the meaning of the words they use, for example, a child says spontaneously, "It's little, that means the same as small". The children use their imaginations well at all times and every type of activity becomes pretend play; even the climbing frame becomes a pirate ship in their games. All children can recognise their names and many can recognise other familiar words. They enjoy books and stories and are interested in letters and the sounds they make. Many activities, such as construction toys, jigsaw puzzles, and cutting, help the children develop good hand-eye coordination. They have many opportunities for mark making and enjoy drawing and making lists and notes in the pretend play areas. Most older and more able children can form recognisable letters and write their names. Their achievements are valued by the staff and used to name their artwork displayed on the walls.

The children are interested in number and many can count, correctly linking numbers with objects and numerals. They begin to solve simple number problems, for instance, working out how many cups or plates they need for their children at their table. Many children can recognise and name simple geometrical shapes. Some can describe how they can identify a triangle because it has three corners or distinguish a rectangle from a square because of the length of its sides. The children use measuring charts to plot their growth and make tally charts, for example, of the number of clocks in the nursery, to help them count. They are interested in sequences and some were making a line using the numbers from five down to one in the cabin of their 'space shuttle'.

There are many activities which help the children find out about the world around them. They talk about their local community and the culture and traditions of others in society. They investigate materials and find out how things work. For example, they explore ice and watch how it melts when talking about the Arctic and cold. They grow plants and enjoy planting and caring for sunflower seeds. At all times the staff encourage the children to use their imaginations and develop their own ideas in creative activities. A group of children were very involved in working cooperatively together to build a 'space shuttle' from large boxes. After discussion with the staff and looking at pictures in books, they selected from a varied range of craft materials putting their ideas into practice, and making further suggestions, such as, "We need to draw a map so we know where we are going". The children enjoy singing and join in enthusiastically with words and actions, and have the benefit of a member of staff accompanying them on the piano.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The children begin to learn about the community they live in and the wider world through taking part in a range of activities. Although there are currently few outings away from the nursery, many visitors come to talk with the children about what they do. Recent visitors have included a vet and a nurse, and others are planned. The children find out about diversity in society and learn about life in other parts of the world. There is a good range of displays and resources, including dressing-up clothes, puzzles and books, which show positive images of different cultures, beliefs and abilities. The children gain a broader knowledge of the food, music and traditions of other people through themed activities about festivals, such as Chinese New Year, and countries such as India or Africa. The children are starting to learn some simple sign language and this is incorporated in their morning welcome song. This approach helps children begin to develop an accepting and tolerant attitude towards others.

The children generally behave very well, playing cooperatively together, sharing fairly and taking turns. Some children work together to complete a large floor puzzle, patiently waiting their turn to insert their pieces. Any minor disputes, for example, over who can play with a toy, are quickly resolved, and sometimes the children negotiate an amicable solution without the need for adult intervention. The children are very polite and respectful following the good example of the staff. They are keen to help others, for example, by preparing the snack, and they show concern for children who are absent from the nursery. The staff are consistent in their expectations for the children and use positive methods to help them learn to manage their own behaviour. They praise them so that they understand when they have done well, perhaps for saying "thank you", for tidying up or sharing a toy. Sometimes, the children receive other rewards, such as a sticker or being allowed to add a tick to their tally chart, and they are very proud when their achievements are recognised like this.

The children's individual needs are well supported by the staff who work closely with their parents and share information with them daily. New younger children usually attend the Fledglings group and their parents are encouraged to stay until their child is settled and confident. Staff make the most of this time, talking with parents and getting to know the child to ensure they are secure and comfortable. Details about any specific requirements, such as allergies or other medical conditions, are updated regularly and there are systems in place to ensure that all staff are aware of any changes. At present, there are no children who have any recognized learning difficulties or disabilities but systems are in place to support children as the need arises. Staff liaise with parents about any developmental or other concerns they identify.

The partnership with parents and carers is good and this supports the children's learning and progress effectively. There is an open and friendly relationship between the staff and the parents who are very complimentary about the nursery. Parents receive good quality information about what is provided for their child. There are displays about the Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to three matters framework and there are regular meetings so parents can find out more and discuss these subjects in more detail with the staff. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed about the activities the children have been doing and the next topics they will be learning about. There are many opportunities for parents to find out how well their child is progressing. This includes discussions with their child's key-person, regular written reports, as well as having free access to their child's developmental records. Parents can add their own comments and information to these records. Staff encourage parents to be involved with their

child's learning, perhaps by sharing any special knowledge or skills with others at the nursery, or by helping their child find items for the interest tables or to complete fun activity sheets with them at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Suitable policies and procedures are in place to support the children's safety, learning and welfare. There is a satisfactory process for ensuring that new staff are suitable to work with the children and for addressing any written complaints from parents. The provider and her deputy have recently undertaken management training and are currently in the process of reviewing many of the procedures to make sure that they contain all the necessary details. Most of the required records are maintained. However, the records of the times of attendance of children, staff and visitors are not always accurate and do not show the times that the children are present. Staff have not requested written permission from parents to seek emergency medical treatment or advice for their child.

The staff work cooperatively together and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. The children's needs are well supported because a good ratio of adults to children is maintained and staff are deployed effectively and work directly with them. Staff meet the qualification requirements and have a positive attitude towards their professional development and regularly undertake training. There is effective grouping of the children to make sure that their individual needs are met and age-appropriate activities provided for them. There are separate sessions for the youngest children. The staff organise the premises well, creating a child-friendly environment and usually promoting the children's independence.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff work effectively together, ensuring that the sessions run smoothly for the children. Responsibility for planning and providing activities and assessing the children's progress is shared amongst staff. The provider has begun to assess the strengths of the nursery education and to identify areas for further development. She monitors the quality of the teaching and encourages staff in their personal development, gradually delegating more responsibility to them as they gain experience. Staff have begun to evaluate the activities, considering how well the activities have supported the children's learning and they use this information to inform their future planning. This approach ensures that children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the provider agreed to review the storage of toys and equipment to provide more space for children to play, and to provide opportunities for parents to see the curriculum plans and copies of the policies and procedures documents. She also agreed to develop the monitoring and evaluation systems and curriculum plans to ensure that the more able children are challenged appropriately.

Since then, the provider has removed some toys and equipment from the play areas and this has increased the floor space available so, for example, the children can set out train tracks. Resources are changed regularly so that the children do not become bored with what is accessible to them. The parents are now able to inspect files containing copies of the nursery's policies and procedures and the operational plan. Although the weekly curriculum plans are not displayed, information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to three matters framework is

readily available for parents. Staff arrange meetings for groups of parents to discuss the curriculum the children will be following. They keep them informed about the themes and significant events through regular newsletters and notices. This has enhanced the partnership with parents and carers.

Effective systems are in place to monitor the children's progress and staff frequently observe and record what they can do. They are developing systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and the activities in supporting the children's learning. The staff group the children by age and ability and plan activities for the two groups separately. This is effective in providing levels of challenge appropriate to their ability ensuring that all children, including the more able, are making good progress in their learning.

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 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):

- request written consent from parents to seek medical treatment or advice for their child in the event of an emergency
- review the procedures for keeping a record of the times that children, staff and visitors are present.

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 some group times, for example, the registration time.

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