

Blandford Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY347338
Inspection date	17 April 2007
Inspector	Bridget Copson

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Registered person	Dorset Sure Start
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of 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 Blandford Children's Centre crèche opened in 2007 and operates from within two refurbished rooms in an old school building in Blandford, Dorset. A maximum of 15 children may attend the group at any one time. The sessions currently operate on Tuesday mornings from 09:30 to 11:45 during term time only. They are provided for parents attending courses, and days and times will vary as they run alongside planned courses.

There are currently 24 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. The group supports children with learning difficulties.

The crèche is run by two key staff who both hold early years qualifications. They are supported by a regular team of staff from the linked out of school club. The staff liaise closely with other related health care professionals.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for within a clean and hygienic environment. Staff have effective systems in place to prevent the spread of infection in all areas. For example, cleaning equipment and resources regularly, using colour coded cloths for cleaning, wearing disposable gloves for nappy changing and disinfecting table tops before snack times. Staff check the condition of toys at the end of each week to ensure everything is clean. A wicker basket is used to encourage parents and staff to remove any baby toys which need cleaning sooner. Children learn about managing good personal hygiene through hand washing routines.

Children's health is further promoted through documentation used to meet their dietary and medical needs. However, parents do not sign to confirm acknowledgment of any medication given for consistency of care. Staff keep written records of any accidents, incidents and existing injuries to share with parents. Most staff hold a first aid certificate and a kit is kept to support them in caring for children appropriately in the event of an accident.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles well through activities and staff guidance. They enjoy different fresh fruits as well as a sweet biscuit at snack times. Parents have the opportunities to learn more about healthy options, breast feeding and weaning from workshops within the centre to further promote good health. Children have access to drinks of water throughout the session to ensure they do not get thirsty.

Children benefit from a good range of play activities and equipment every session to promote their health and physical development. For example, indoors they play with large scale soft play equipment, use push along toys around the rooms and climb up and through the climbing platform. In the outdoor play area, they use ride on toys, trikes, ball games and large one-handed tools to water paint on the walls and paving stones. Babies and younger children's early mobility, balance and strength is also supported well through age appropriate activities within their play area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for within a well-maintained premises in which rooms are freshly decorated and equipment in good condition. They are kept safe and secure in all areas of the provision through good safety measures in place and close supervision. However, the temporary outdoor play area does not have fixed safety gates to ensure children cannot access the car park. Although staff do supervise the area well, this is a potential hazard. Staff continually risk assess all areas of the premises whilst building work continues to ensure high standards of safety are maintained. The fire procedure is practised by staff and with children at some sessions, depending on how settled they are at the time. This supports them in responding appropriately in the event of an emergency.

Children access toys easily and independently from low units and open shelves within the play rooms. All toys are suitable for the ages attending and staff store anything else on high shelves to ensure children can play safely and unhindered. Appropriate furniture and equipment is used to support the developmental needs of younger children and babies and to keep them safe around older children.

Children's welfare is safeguarded efficiently by staff who have good systems in place to keep protect them. Staff have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the correct child protection procedures to follow in the event of any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good range of play provision and activities to support all areas of their learning and development. For example, they build with different constructional sets, complete shape sorters and puzzles and use threading, peg boards, activity centres and sensory toys. They use their imagination in the dedicated home corner, dressing up, playing with small world sets, music and using different resources in creative activities. Children also explore story, sensory and reference books.

Children arrive happy and settle quickly into play with staff. For example, they get involved in building models using shaped blocks with staff whilst others set out the home corner to make and serve meals for staff. Children move freely between the two play rooms and the outdoor play area. They choose according to their interests which supports them in feeling settled and involved. They use their imaginations well in singing and exploring stories in which they use props from around the room to bring it to life. They communicate well through expressing their feelings and discussing their likes and dislikes. For example, a child tells others 'I like strawberries, they are sweet and juicy'.

Staff plan children's learning at each weekly session using an adult led activity as a focus. They link the appropriate learning intentions relating to the Birth to three matters framework and Foundation Stage curriculum according to the ages of children booked to attend. Staff are developing the system of observing children and using this information to plan their next stages of development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for with equal concern and are all included in all aspects of the sessions. Staff meet their individual needs with care and in close consultation with parents and any external agencies. For example, parents are encouraged to get actively involved, to talk freely with staff at every session and are involved in any additional support through the centre. Staff are proactive in highlighting any concerns they have regarding children's development. The special educational needs co-ordinator acts as a link with parents and external agencies to ensure children's additional needs are met. Children's awareness of diversity is promoted well through the multi-cultural resources used and through meeting others who attend from different backgrounds and lifestyles.

Children behave well and are learning what is expected of them, such as saying 'please' and 'thank you', taking turns, listening and sharing. Staff promote their positive attitudes and behaviour through acting as good examples, clear discussion, close support and using a sticker reward system. Any unwelcome behaviour is treated as an area of learning and part of children's natural development. Staff manage this through calm and gentle discussion and lots of support.

Staff have established good working relationships with parents to support them in caring for children consistently and according to their wishes. For example, parents are encouraged to get involved through attending the drop in sessions to build confidence and relationships with

others, through joining the parents' forum and discussing their child's needs with staff. They are kept well-informed through a crèche information leaflet, access to the policies and procedures and through regular newsletters. They are also provided with information on how to use resources to promote their child's learning and are advised on their child's stage of development through child profile forms.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a team of staff who attend training opportunities to update their knowledge and skills and to support them in meeting children's needs. The setting has good systems in place for ensuring staff caring for children are suitable to do so. This ensures their welfare is safeguarded. New staff undergo a six month induction programme to ensure they are well prepared and trained in all aspects of the provision. All staff benefit from supervision sessions every six months to support their training needs and development. This all ensures children are cared for by motivated staff who are clear of their role and responsibilities within the crèche.

Children benefit from well-organised sessions. Staff prepare the environment effectively with segregated areas of play, a secluded area for young children and babies and open access to the outdoor play area. Staff work efficiently as a team to ensure children are well-supported. For example, to provide one to one support for children who are struggling to settle in. They are well-deployed at all times to allow children to move about freely according to what they wish to play with. For example, children wishing to remain outside during group story time may do so under direct supervision of staff to ensure their choice of play is not hindered. The setting has good systems in place to monitor the quality of care. These include risk assessments, session and activity evaluations, meetings and using the self-evaluation as a working document. However, there are some areas for improvement in health and safety which have not been highlighted.

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

Children's records and related documentation is kept well-organised and stored securely to allow appropriate staff easy access to information whilst confidentiality is maintained.

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 all areas of the provision remain safe and secure for children, especially the outdoor play area
- ensure parents sign any medication records to confirm acknowledgement of any medication given to children.

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