



Spotted Dog Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY298397
Inspection date	10 June 2005
Inspector	Lesley Ormrod

Setting Address	Clawthorpe Hall Business Centre, Clawthorpe, Carnforth, Lancashire, LA6 1NU
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Registered person	Deborah Duckett and Claire Robinson
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

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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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Spotted Dog Children's Centre is run by Deborah Duckett and Claire Robinson. It opened in 2005 and operates from three rooms and associated facilities in a modern, recently refurbished building. The setting is situated in the parish of Burton-in-Kendal, near to the town of Kendal in Cumbria. A maximum of fifty children may attend the centre at any one time. The provision is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from birth to under 8 years on roll. Of these 20 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the nearby villages and the local towns of Carnforth and Kendal. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs.

The centre employs 10 staff. Eight of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health needs are known and met in discussion with their parents. Their personal care is managed well through good staff understanding of hygiene practices and well-thought-out facilities. Younger children can relax and feel comfortable as they play with the toys and watch the mobiles whilst being changed. 3 and 4-year-olds can put on their sun hats and are developing an understanding of the need to wear these when outside on sunny days. Older children can independently use the toilets and understand when they should wash their hands. They do not yet have a secure understanding of why good hygiene is important.

Children enjoy the well-managed snack and meal times as they sit in small social groups with staff who encourage their interaction skills. 3 and 4-year-olds compare their lunch box contents with each other and show with delight items such as grapes, celery, cheese sticks and sandwiches. Older children develop some understanding of healthy choices as staff comment at times that this item is healthy for you. Most children can independently perform tasks such as using knives pre-loaded with margarine to spread on their crackers, serve each other with cucumber. They are not consistently encouraged to extend their skills to load the knives and self-select their snacks. Younger children have good self-feeding and drinking skills with skilled staff support to encourage their independence. Their nutritional needs are met as the centre provides guidance to parents on healthy options for lunch boxes and staff are fully aware of individual dietary needs.

All children have many varied opportunities to be active outside in free play and planned activities that encourage their physical skills. 3 and 4-year-olds develop good large and small motor skills as they use the gym, scoot around on the sit-and-ride equipment, bounce on the trampoline. They enjoy the parachute activities and run confidently under and over with good understanding of directional commands. They do not yet have an understanding of what happens to their bodies when they are physically active and why exercise is good for their bodies. Younger children develop their coordination as they enjoy dancing, use the large baby bouncers and learn to push tricycles along with their feet. Children use their walking skills to develop their awareness of their local environment as they go to visit the local playground and shops.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel secure in the new premises with well-thought-out use of space that encourages their confidence to move around independently. The provision of safe, large windows in the rooms effectively develops all children's interest in their environment as they chat about what they can see, watch the wildlife and look at weather changes. Older children can go to the toilets independently and move safely around the continuous provision areas. Younger children can safely explore the toys and sand play set out for them in their large room. Babies have a safe cosy area in which they can practice their early exploratory movement skills. Children have a range of easily accessible equipment, toys and resources to provide for many of their play and learning needs. Younger children need to develop their awareness of themselves in enjoyable activities such as face painting through access to available mirrors. The interest of 3 and 4-year-olds in choosing books to read, role playing in the home corner and using the writing table requires encouraging through considered use of resources.

Children's safety is assessed and managed well through good risk assessments for the premises and for outings. They take part in regular emergency evacuations and understand that they follow the staff outside when the buzzer sounds. The needs of all children to be safe at the centre are met through good security systems for entrance control and emergency response buttons in all rooms. Children are encouraged to tidy up, pick up items they drop and not to throw the sand but do not yet learn how by doing so, this keeps themselves and others safe as they play.

Children are protected by the staff's good knowledge of child protection through their regular attendance at courses and their clear understanding of how to follow the procedures if necessary. Older children have some understanding of not approaching strangers unless staff have indicated that it is safe to chat. The arrangements to protect children will be enhanced by updating the child protection; uncollected child and accident policies to reflect notification to the regulator, Ofsted; emergency care and procedures to be followed if an allegation is received.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

All children enjoy their sessions at the centre and arrive confidently to share in the fun of playing together. They have good interactions with staff who give them focussed individual attention and active interest in their play. Babies have their care needs met well and enjoy experiences to encourage their developmental progress such as exploring paint with their fingers. Younger children up to the age of two follow a routine for the day that facilitates their free play skills, involvement in a planned activity and provides for their rest needs. They explore the sand with their hands and move it with implements, roll a balloon in paint to make a pattern and look at pictures in books. Younger children's access to a curriculum that meets their developmental needs, with an assessment system identifying their progress and next steps to achieve, is at present being prepared using the Birth to 3 matters framework.

Most children aged 2 and 3 join the 3 and 4-year-olds and participate in their activities. Their particular play and learning needs are not differentiated yet. Children's successful transfer between the younger and older groups has been thought out with information about their achievements shared.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children's access to a suitable curriculum and assessment process to meet their learning and play needs has been completely rethought since April with external advice sought from the early years advisers. Staff had identified that previously used systems were ineffective in meeting the curriculum needs of the children and progress could not be accurately measured. From September 3 and 4-year-olds' identifiable progress towards the early learning goals will be facilitated through detailed long-term and medium-term planning that clearly identifies their progression through the stepping stones. The learning needs of 3 and 4-year-olds presently attending have been re-assessed by the newly-appointed leader, manager and early years adviser with a clear plan agreed to prioritise essential stepping stones to focus on, particularly for children transferring to school. Each child's achievements, with samples of their work, will be observed, recorded and assessed through processes now identified that will allow for accurate planning for their next steps to be learnt.

Children are developing positive attitudes to learning and play encouraged by the consistent strategies recently set up by the staff team. They will persist at their play for longer periods and develop their ideas and thinking as they take part in planned activities. Their levels of achievement as they progress towards the early learning goals are improving through the clear focus on stepping stones to achieve steps such as writing their names and using scissors competently. Children thoroughly enjoyed a well-planned parachute activity that encouraged their team work, physical skills, early number skills, colours and shapes naming. They could confidently follow instructions, running diagonally to a matching coloured triangle and laughingly name the ball correctly as small from misnaming on purpose by staff. Children are developing their language and thinking skills through good staff questioning and extension of their ideas. They decide together how to make up the large farm house pieces using a good range of positional language as they discuss the problem. 3 and 4-year-olds can recognise the initial letter of their name as they sit on their name mats for circle time but are unable to identify initial letters in other contexts. Most children can imaginatively use their ideas, such as drawing zig-zags and hearts, to create their designs to decorate flags for their sand castles. Children demonstrate a basic understanding of numbers, one to five and use these accurately as they chat about how many bales they will have each as they construct their towers. Children do not readily pick up books to enjoy reading, write freely as they play or show sustained interest in developing role play as provision in these areas is insufficiently developed to stimulate their play and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's understanding of equality is promoted through good staff facilitation of their play and encouragement of their respect for each other. Boys and girls play equally together with resources such as the small world farm set and vehicles, tidy up together and decide to make dinner in the home corner. Older children show an understanding of their own culture and enjoy participating in activities such as talking about holidays, encouraging their knowledge of the wider world. Their awareness of other cultures and traditions is not yet enhanced through access to visual displays, posters and resources. Children from other ethnic backgrounds and those with special needs are fully included with their needs understood and met by staff. Good individual education plans, prepared by the proactive senco, effectively meet the learning targets identified for children with special educational needs. These children make good progress through the continuity of approach agreed between the senco, staff and their parents. Children's learning of desired behaviours is consistently managed by all staff who have agreed the best strategies to use to develop children's understanding of right and wrong. Younger children are guided to modify their behaviour through appropriate diversion approaches. Older children are gaining a sound understanding of what is unacceptable behaviour in the nursery but are not always encouraged to think about why a behaviour is not wanted. They are motivated by the celebrating of their good behaviour as they proudly collect a reward sticker from staff. Pre-school children are developing good caring and sharing skills as they offer to help one another with a task and share a toy from home. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Children's induction into the centre is carefully considered with their parents and facilitated sensitively to allow children to settle in confidently. Younger children's continuity of care is managed well as they take home daily sheets that give their parents good information about their day. Children's well-being is promoted in the pre-school through the good partnership with parents. The home-link books give parents detailed information about their child's activities and provide for parents to share information back about their child's progress at home. This effectively informs the staff's planning to meet children's individual needs. Children's achievements are celebrated through the sharing of the end-of-year progress reports with their parents. Future parents' evenings are planned so that children's learning is promoted through the active involvement of their parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are protected as the manager ensures that appointed staff are suitable to work with children. Their needs are met by the satisfactory leadership and management arrangements together with the skills and experience of the enthusiastic and committed staff team. Information to meet children's needs is collected in agreement with parents and filed confidentially. Children's care is managed well as the staff understand the centre's operational plan and use in their practices although some updating is required to extend the care procedures for children. Staff expertise in looking after children is regularly appraised although the system to monitor the quality of the teaching of pre-school children to assess the quality of their learning is not fully in place. Children enjoy independently moving

around the large spacious rooms and staff have given thought to the lay-out and best use of resourced areas to attract and stimulate their interest in playing.

The quality of children's care and learning has been rigorously assessed by the manager and her staff with weaknesses and strengths identified. Children's achievements were found not to be accurately assessed and recorded to inform the planning to meet their individual learning needs. Systems have been agreed to develop the outcomes for children in the newly registered provision. Younger children will have access to a developing curriculum and assessment system that makes good use of the Birth to three framework materials to meet their developmental needs. Nursery education children will access a newly planned curriculum and assessment process that will facilitate their individual progress towards the early learning goals. This means that the provision satisfactorily meets the needs of children who attend overall.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report since registration.

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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):

- enhance the arrangements for children's care by updating the child protection policy; the uncollected child policy and the special educational needs policy
- enhance the progress that younger children make by implementing the revised planning and assessment materials based on the use of resources such as the Birth to three matters framework
- develop children's knowledge and understanding of how being healthily active

affects their bodies and makes them feel good: encourage their understanding of why it is healthy to wash hands, wipe tables

- develop children's knowledge and understanding of keeping safe during daily routines and play.

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):

- extend the opportunities to stimulate children's play and learning by developing the continuous provision with the allocation of staff support to enhance the play in the various areas
- provide for all children's learning needs to be met by: completing the planning for the foundation stage curriculum to be offered; ensuring that all aspects of the areas of learning are covered in sufficient depth to extend more able 4 year olds; accurately assessing the progress of all children using the newly-acquired stepping stones' assessments
- extend children's understanding of different cultures, races and traditions by providing appropriate displays, posters and resources.

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