

St Catherine's Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	144310
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Inspector	Marilyn Joy
Setting Address	Cutlers Place, Colehill, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 2HN
Telephone number	01202 883763
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Registered person	St Catherine's Kindergarten
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Catherine's Kindergarten is managed by a committee of parents. It operates from a self-contained classroom unit within the grounds of St Catherine's RC Primary School, which includes toilet and kitchen facilities. The kindergarten has a secure outdoor play area adjacent to the premises and use of the school playground. Children attend from the surrounding areas.

The kindergarten is registered for a maximum of 26 children from two years to under eight years. It is the kindergarten's practice to accept children from two years nine months and to operate afternoon sessions in the Autumn term for children attending the reception class. There are currently 29 children on roll which includes 28 children in receipt of funding for nursery education. A small number of children attend with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The group opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions run from 08:45 to 11:45.

There is a team of six staff who work with the children. There are three qualified members of staff including the leader who is a qualified teacher. There are close links with the school, to which most children go on to attend. The group receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted extremely well by staff who have a clear understanding of the importance of hygiene, nutrition and physical development, and reflect this in their daily practice. Effective hygiene routines are followed to prevent the spread of infection and steps are taken to raise children's awareness, for example, by explaining germs are spread if you do not wash your hands and food should not be eaten if it falls on the floor. Clear systems ensure staff are fully aware of children's individual health and dietary requirements so they can be complied with. Most documentation is thorough and completed accurately and clearly.

Healthy practices, such as cleaning your teeth, participating in daily exercise and eating healthy foods, are promoted throughout daily activities and topics. Children enjoy a refreshing variety of fruits and vegetables at snack time and take it in turns to cut up fruit for everyone. They learn to recognise their names when looking for their seat and then sit sociably together chatting to staff. They take turns to help wash up when they have finished. Excellent opportunities are offered for children to develop their physical skills. Routine and practical activities enable children to develop their hand-eye coordination and as a consequence master pre-writing skills. They competently use a dust pan and brush to sweep up the sand, do up the fastenings when putting their shoes on and negotiate scoops and tubes before filling them with sand. They use a variety of tools for mark-making, learn to use scissors and fix screws to the work bench. Children explore a very good range of small and large equipment indoors and outdoors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

A bright and inviting environment is offered where children can flourish and parents feel confident and secure. Staff are prepared and ready to greet children and parents as they arrive. Decorative displays of children's work, informative notice boards and colourful photo boards all contribute to the welcoming atmosphere offered. Children benefit from the excellent range of stimulating resources which are clean, in good condition and easily accessible, indoors and outdoors. The innovative garden inspires and excites children's interest creating an effective learning environment, as well as promoting an interest in the natural world.

A strong emphasis is given to ensuring children are safe and secure. Staff are vigilant and supervise children well. They encourage their awareness of keeping themselves safe through consistent daily routines and guidance, such as not running in the classroom and being careful of others when throwing the bean bags. Children take it in turns to help check the garden is safe and the gate is locked before everyone can go out to play. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and provide parents with details of their responsibilities. Parental consent is obtained for off-site outings, such as trips to the post box, however, details of the outings, for example, who went, where and when, are not retained and children's absence is not recorded in the register which would be necessary in an emergency. Fire drills are carried out regularly so that children and staff know what to do in the event of a fire.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children flourish in an exciting environment where they are happy, settled and stimulated. They arrive confidently and are eager to decide what they want to do. They benefit from the extensive range of stimulating and challenging activities offered, the free-flow system which operates for most of the session and the extremely effective support from staff. They have the freedom to direct their own learning and choose whether they want to play inside or outside. Planning is differentiated to incorporate the needs of the younger children and the Birth the three matters framework is followed very well. The excellent relationships developed between children, staff and parents facilitates children's learning and self-confidence.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Skilled staff deliver an exciting programme of stimulating and innovative experiences which challenge and interest children. Competent teaching occurs naturally and staff move seamlessly between activities to support their learning. They help children to focus and guide them towards meaningful and productive activities they then continue independently, for example, rather than throwing bean bags aimlessly a game is introduced and developed as others quickly join in. Children are given time to explore, practise and become proficient at self-chosen activities. Well-planned and purposeful experiences, such as growing vegetables and flowers, maximise potential learning opportunities across all areas of development. Children are involved in all stages of the process learning about life cycles, caring for living things, creating compost and using a variety of tools. They become familiar with words on plant labels, measure how high the sunflowers are, count how many potatoes they have dug up, compare how big they are and taste them when cooked. Children's enthusiasm for learning is mirrored by enthusiastic and skilful staff.

Children's confidence and self-esteem is promoted exceptionally well. They are proud to take turns and carry out responsible jobs where they also benefit from the individual attention they receive. They collect fruit from the school for snack time which aids their transition into school as they become familiar with the environment. Staff have high expectations for children and give them effective support in order to succeed. Regular observations and daily discussions enables children's next steps for learning to be identified and incorporated into the weekly plans. Children's hand-in-hand books and photographic displays provide clear examples of their achievements and experiences.

Communication skills are given a high priority. Relaxed conversations with staff encourage children to talk about what they are doing and develop their vocabulary and understanding. Inspirational activities engage children's interest and effective teaching consolidates their learning. Children knowledgeably explain how the butterflies in the kindergarten originated from caterpillars, turn into a chrysalis, which is also known as a cocoon, and then into butterflies. They examine them at each stage, find out what they eat and wait with anticipation for them to fly away when they are released. Their observations are reinforced through stories, reference books and discussions. Children listen attentively at circle time and enthusiastically contribute to counting songs and stories. Mathematical language and concepts are introduced into practical activities that children understand, for example, they work out which is the heaviest when balancing shells on the scales, solve simple problems when deciding how shapes and objects fit together and are introduced to sharing as they count bounces on the trampoline.

Children are extremely motivated and are keen to participate in activities. They investigate different media and materials, observe changes when baking bread or melting ice, find out about the local community when going on trips and the wider world during topics. Individual experiences are highly valued and parents are encouraged to join in. Creativity, originality and expressiveness are valued. Children enjoy experimenting with different paint effects and modelling with clay. They are curious about what things feel like and have the freedom to explore, such as dipping a sticky finger into a pot of glitter and seeing it glisten in the light or feeling how cold your hands are after touching ice. Children are fully involved and engrossed in activities that enable them to make excellent progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem within an environment that values everyone and nurtures them as individuals. Effective strategies are used to help children to understand what is expected and behave well. They receive frequent praise and encouragement as well as consistent guidance to help them differentiate right from wrong. Children learn to share and take turns as they play, for example when playing games or taking turns on the computer. Respect for others is promoted at all times and through resources, displays and activities an awareness of the diversity of society is encouraged. Children develop good manners and routinely use please and thank you when interacting with others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Good arrangements are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Individual plans are prepared in partnership with parents and other professionals in order to promote their learning. Most documentation relating to the arrangements for managing children's care are well-organised and in place. Close relationships are developed between the school and the pre-school to support the transition from one to the other. Children make visits to the school which helps them to settle, however, arrangements for this are informal. There are no written agreements between the school and parents about how these visits are managed, such as, who is responsible for the children and what happens if there is an emergency.

Partnership with parents in respect of nursery education is outstanding. Parents are provided with a very informative and attractive prospectus which includes key information to enable them to gain an extremely clear understanding of the kindergarten, its aims and expectations. There are exceptionally good systems for sharing information about children's achievements and progress towards the early learning goals. Parents receive excellent information regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum, termly planning and how they can support this learning at home. Children's hand-in-hand books, as well as photographic displays and discussions with staff, provide an exceptionally good insight into the time children spend at the kindergarten.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The kindergarten is efficiently organised to promote good outcomes for children. A thorough review of all outcomes fosters continual improvement, for example the implementation of formal induction procedures to improve the current system. Comprehensive policies and procedures are regularly updated and are reflected in practice. Robust systems for recruitment and employment of staff ensure they are suitably qualified to care for children. The organisation of space, resources and the deployment of staff supports children extremely well. Most

documentation is in place and maintained appropriately, although some requires modification and the attendance register needs to accurately show when children are present. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management in respect of the nursery education is outstanding. Strong leadership, as well as a dedicated team of staff, create an atmosphere conducive to learning enabling children to flourish and make excellent progress towards the early learning goals. Effective monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the provision, comprehensive systems for planning and assessment and working in partnership with parents enables children to play and learn in a rich and stimulating environment where high quality teaching promotes individual progress.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the kindergarten was asked to make improvements to the registration system, the sickness policy and child protection statement. The system for recording children's attendance has been improved and now includes accurate information about when they arrive and leave the session. However, it does not take account of any trips or visits the children make during the session which leaves them vulnerable should there be an emergency. The sickness policy and child protection statement have been updated and include all relevant and up-to-date information to enable the kindergarten to safeguard children's well-being.

At the last nursery education inspection the kindergarten was asked to improve the information given to parents, encourage staff to undertake training to develop their teaching skills, provide opportunities for children to develop mathematical skills and increase their access to resources which positively reflect a range of cultures and ability. Significant improvements have been made in all areas which has resulted in high quality teaching and learning for children. Parents are provided with meaningful information about children's achievements and progress. An outstanding learning environment is provided by staff who interact effectively with children enabling them to make very good progress according to their individual abilities. Mathematical development is routinely promoted through realistic activities and resources promoting an awareness of the diversity of society are evident in all areas.

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.

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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):

- ensure detailed records are maintained of all outings and visits, that formal arrangements are agreed with the school and parents for any visits the children make to the school and the attendance register clearly records when children are absent.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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