

# Datchworth Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	146430
<b>Inspection date</b>	31 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jo Rowley
<b>Setting Address</b>	Datchworth Village Hall, Datchworth Green, Datchworth, Hertfordshire, SG3 6TL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 812153
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Datchworth Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 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?

Datchworth Pre-School opened in 1994 and operates from the village hall in the village of Datchworth which is located in a rural area of Hertfordshire. The children have access to two rooms and have shared access to an enclosed outside area.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9.15 until 12.00 and there is an option of an additional lunch club on a Tuesday and Thursday from 12:00 until 13.00. Afternoon sessions operates on a Monday and Wednesday from 12:30 until 14:45. The pre-school is open term time only. There are currently 38 children aged from two years nine months to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for nursery education.

Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and has systems in place to support children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs eight staff. Six of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff generally protect children's health appropriately. All accident and medication records are well maintained and the required parental signatures are in place. However, permission is not in place for children to receive emergency medical treatment or advice. This does not fully support their welfare. If children become ill they are made comfortable whilst waiting for a parent or carer. First aid equipment is accessible so that children can receive immediate treatment in the event of an accident and this has recently been updated and replenished as necessary. There are some hygiene procedures in place and the pre-school is clean and tidy with tables being cleaned appropriately. Children are learning about being healthy because staff ensure that they wash their hands before they eat snack and after visiting the toilet. However, personal hygiene is not effectively promoted as children use the same water for hand washing, therefore, they are not fully protected from cross-infection.

Children enjoy a variety of healthy snacks, which are often provided by parents on a rota system, for example, fruit, crackers and cheese. They have water or milk at snack time and have access to fresh drinking water throughout the session. During snack time staff serve children with their snack and drinks, consequently children's independence is not fully promoted. Children with dietary needs eat appropriately because all staff are aware of their individual needs. Children regularly enjoy inside and outside physical activity, they have access to a range of resources such as bikes, balls, tunnels and balancing beams and they enjoy singing songs, using musical instruments and activity rhymes, all of which help to develop their physical skills.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

The pre-school provides a welcoming and friendly environment for all children and parents. Children are secure because staff are vigilant, for example, when children and parents enter and exit the pre-school staff supervise the doors to ensure that children are not able to leave unsupervised. Visitors to the pre-school are requested to sign in and out of the premises, further protecting children's safety. Children use a suitable range of equipment that is appropriate to their needs. They are able to access a variety of toys and resources set out by staff each session, although there is limited opportunity for children to enjoy spontaneous play. Children have access to other areas of play such as the home corner and book area.

Furniture is child sized, in good repair and easy to use. Children are cared for in a safe environment. Staff carry out basic checks on a daily basis and more detailed checks are carried out each term. Children gain an awareness of the emergency evacuation procedures as these are discussed and practised each term. Their welfare is safeguarded as staff follow sound guidelines regarding child protection and have an appropriate understanding of the procedures they need to follow. There is a designated member of staff who has overall responsibility for child protection to ensure that the correct procedures are followed if staff have any concerns in this area, and some staff have attended training to extend their knowledge of child protection.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show sound levels of confidence and self-esteem, they work and play independently and with others. Children benefit from the commitment of staff who show an ability to meet their individual care needs. Carefully planned, adult-directed activities enable children to begin to express their ideas, make some choices and develop their self-discipline. However, there are limited opportunities for children to self-select resources and therefore, they do not fully engage in spontaneous play. Children interact well with staff who let them develop current topics and activities. For example, children bring items from home in line with the letter of the week. Children excitedly show their chosen things such as a vase, a van and a video to the other children in the group and staff praise the children for bringing these things in to the pre-school. Children are keen to participate in the activities and play opportunities offered. An example of this is when children use clay to make their own bugs, in line with the current theme. They talk about how soft and smooth the clay is and children proudly show their creations to other staff members once finished.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making some progress and their overall development is generally promoted because most staff have a sound knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. However, children are not always offered sufficient challenge limiting their further thinking and development. Planning methods demonstrate how activities are adapted to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities however, they do not show how these are adapted to meet all children's differing abilities. There is minimal assessment of children's starting points and the assessment procedure is not sufficiently updated to give a clear indication of children's progress. This may potentially result in a delay in highlighting possible concerns and in planning activities which offer appropriate challenge. Children participate in activities which generally foster their development and help them acquire new skills and knowledge. These include regular opportunities to participate in role play, crafts, construction and physical play. They also participate in themed work, providing them with opportunities to look at a range of topics, such as bugs, colours and shapes.

Children are confident and mostly settled, entering the session happily. They know the routine well, for example, they settle at an activity on entering the pre-school, choosing a book to read after snack and tidying up when the bell rings for tidy up time. Their independence is not fully encouraged as there are limited opportunities for children to do things for themselves. For example, at snack time staff pour the children's drinks and hand out the snack individually and before outside play staff collect the coats from the hallway and give them out. Children's confidence and self-esteem are promoted because staff consistently offer meaningful praise, for example, during the clay activity a member of staff says to a child "that is a very lovely caterpillar, you have worked really hard on that". Children generally concentrate and listen to stories and are developing a sound appreciation of this area, enjoying both group and individual stories. Whilst listening to 'The hungry caterpillar' story children are encouraged to join in with predicting what happens next and clearly enjoy the story.

Children appear to be making acceptable progress in speaking and listening skills and make suitable use of books. Their language is developing as they have opportunities to experiment and express their thoughts freely. They are beginning to understand that print carries meaning, for example, the older children participate in phonic work. They write the letters freehand after some tracing practise and think of things that they can draw which start with that letter. For example, one child draws a picture of 'mummy' underneath the letter 'M'. However, children's

independence is not promoted and children are not sufficiently challenged as staff write the words under the picture for them.

Children are beginning to recognise that numbers carry meaning, correctly counting cups to nine at snack time. Their understanding of positional language is developing through use of play dough and everyday activities. When making play dough snails and caterpillars children talk about how 'long or short' their models are and when building the train track children talk about how 'big and round' the track is. Children participate in problem solving activities such as working out where the pieces go in a jigsaw. For example, two children easily manage the jigsaws that are out and a member of staff says to them how easy the jigsaws are for them to do. The children are not given anything more challenging to complete and therefore, challenge is limited.

Children are developing an understanding of the uses of information technology, for example, through using the computer and age-appropriate software, used independently or with staff support, battery operated resources such as a till, hand held games, toy laptop and torches. They are encouraged to use their senses when exploring and describing objects, for example, through the use of clay. Children talk about the feel of the clay, as staff ask open-ended questions such as "what does it feel like?". Children's knowledge of the world around them is encouraged through activities such as planting different plants and vegetables, including Broccoli and onions, in the outside garden and looking at the life cycles of caterpillars, during the bug theme.

Children are developing an awareness of different forms of physical movement such as pedalling, throwing, catching and balancing, through music and movement sessions, obstacle courses and the use of equipment such as balls and tunnels. Children try to balance along a beam as a member of staff shows them how, if they put their arms out to the side it will help them to balance. As children do this their efforts are praised. They are developing skills in finer physical movements, for example, completing puzzles, using tools such as scissors, rolling pins and paint brushes and small construction resources including trains and tracks. Children are able to identify colours and enjoy a range of opportunities to explore colour mixing, texture and shape, for example, through sand play, play dough and free painting.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and secure in their surroundings. On arrival most children separate from their parents and carers confidently and with ease. They receive a warm welcome from staff who are sensitive to individual needs, for example, newly settled children are given extra support where needed. Children have access to a varied range of resources, including books, dolls, dressing up, small world figures and planned activities celebrating different festivals which assists them in gaining an awareness of diversity and the wider world. The pre-school staff are aware that some children may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and are proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken to include all children in the setting.

Children behave well throughout the provision, although some children show early signs of frustration due to a lack of challenge. Staff listen to what children have to say and treat them with respect. Children learn about responsible behaviour as staff generally reinforce the boundaries in a calm and positive way. Children are praised for their efforts and encouraged to use appropriate behaviour. They show care and concern for each other and have built sound relationships with each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is

fostered. Individual children's backgrounds are acknowledged and respected and children are learning to respect one another and their environment. They share, take turns and negotiate in their play, helping to develop effective social skills.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting. They have opportunities to speak to staff at the beginning and the end of each session and they informally exchange information about the children. Parents have access to the notice board and children benefit by them receiving regular newsletters detailing topics and activities, enabling them to know what their children are participating in. However, although parents are invited to regular parent evenings where they can discuss their children's progress they receive limited information about the Foundation Stage. Although they respond to the inspector positively about the provision and the staff, they are not actively encouraged to become involved in their children's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, the needs of all children are met. Children's well-being is monitored and maintained with systems in place to ensure that the staff working with the children are qualified and safe to do so, for example, staff have relevant checks completed before employment. Children's individual needs are recognised and met with appropriate documents and policies in place that comply with regulation. All individual child record forms have been completed and therefore, staff are aware of their individual needs. The pre-school have a new leader and as a team they are working together to ensure that children feel secure and settled whilst still learning about each other. They are committed to providing a caring environment, and have access to information which will enable them to continue to develop their understanding of children's care and learning through training opportunities. Staff appraisals are completed on a regular basis to ensure that their individual strengths and areas for improvement are addressed effectively.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Though the pre-school leader is new it is clear that the staff are working well together and are developing strategies to evaluate plans which will identify the strengths and areas for improvement within the setting. There is a strong commitment to staff development and each member of staff understands their role and responsibility in extending children's learning and ensuring that children make sound progress towards the early learning goals. They generally prompt discussion and ask appropriate questions, extending language development. Children benefit from a well-motivated staff team who are sound role models. They are sensitive to children's needs and take time to make sure children who are new to the setting are fully supported and encouraged to enjoy new experiences.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the group were asked to devise a suitable procedure to follow in the event of any allegations made against a member of staff. There is a pre-school policy that details the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, and staff are aware of this and therefore, better protected. They were also asked to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all children's medical records. The medical records are kept in a lockable unit out of the reach of children and other adults, therefore, confidentially stored.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 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 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 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):

- obtain written parental permission for children to receive emergency medical treatment or advice
- develop personal hygiene practice in order to prevent cross-infection
- provide opportunities for children to self-select resources and engage in spontaneous 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):

- develop and evaluate methods for assessing and recording children's progress, ensuring that these are used effectively to inform planning
- ensure that children are effectively challenged, in order to explore and develop their play and learning and provide opportunities for them to be more independent within the daily routine
- further develop methods of sharing information with parents about the foundation stage and ensure that opportunities are available for them to contribute to their children's 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)