

Deanwood Ducklings Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	103802
Inspection date	29 January 2008
Inspector	Jane Wakelen
Setting Address	Deanwood Primary Education Technology School, Long Catlis Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 9TX
Telephone number	01634 239531
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Registered person	Deanwood Ducklings and Kids Club
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Deanwood Ducklings Pre-school was established in 1997. The pre-school is managed by a committee. It operates from two adjoining classrooms within the school building, in Gillingham, Kent. A maximum of 32 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open five mornings a week from 08:45 to 11:45, term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 36 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has experience of working with children who have learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five staff. Four staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being are fully supported within the pre-school environment. Children learn the importance of personal hygiene routines, such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack, because staff give gentle reminders about washing away the germs. Children are encouraged to use tissues to wipe their noses and dispose of the tissue in the bin, to promote good hygiene practices. There is provision for children wearing pull-ups to be changed in privacy and staff follow guidelines to ensure the risk of cross infection is minimised. All staff hold a current first aid certificate and understand the importance of ensuring the documentation, such as the accident book is available and up-to-date with parental signatures acknowledging the entry.

Children make choices from the healthy options available at snack time, such as fresh fruit, crackers with cheese and spreads, vegetables and cereal to promote their understanding of healthy eating. Children find their place mat and pour their own drinks from the jugs of water, milk or milkshake available. They sit together at the table, enjoying the social occasion which is supported by an adult. Some children enjoy the responsibility of washing up the cups and drying them, learning good practical routines. Children's dietary requirements are taken into account, including any religious dietary needs and these are recorded and made known to all members of staff to ensure they are fully implemented.

Children have good opportunities to benefit from fresh air and exercise on a daily basis. They can make choices where they wish to play and gain good independent skills, putting on their coats and wellingtons. Children fully engage in meaningful play enjoying the space to run around outside. They develop their spatial awareness as they manoeuvre the tricycles or the sit and ride cars around children and obstacles. Children have equipment to climb on and through, such as the different climbing frames and negotiate different ladders from chain to wood. They can dig in the sand tray or just enjoy splashing in puddles, fully promoting children's well-being and supporting a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe environment where they have room to move around freely, both indoors and outdoors accessing a good range of equipment and resources. There is plenty of natural light for children and the good quality furniture and resources helps ensure the environment is welcoming to children. There are two designated members of staff responsible for health and safety who carry out a risk assessment to identify hazards within the environment and have attended training in this area. There are good systems in place to ensure the safe arrival and departure of children. This includes a member of staff waiting at the door, ensuring children arrive and depart with a responsible adult and a signing in and out book to record children who arrive late or depart early. This ensures an accurate record of children's attendance.

Children access all toys and resources from low level shelving, enabling them to self-select activities or to choose those pre-selected by the staff. The equipment is well maintained and suitable for the ages of children attending the pre-school. Children are able to find toys they enjoy playing with as toys are stored in separate areas around the room to address different areas of learning, for example, the construction area, small world and numeracy.

Fire procedures are in writing and prevention measures in place, such as the fire blanket in the kitchen area and fire extinguishers around the room. There is a book to record fire drills, although only one fire evacuation drill has been carried out in the new premises, thus not fully supporting children's safety in the event of an emergency. Children follow rules within the pre-school and are reminded each day what the rules are, such as not running indoors and to share the toys with their peers.

Staff have a sound understanding of procedures to follow if they have any concerns regarding children in their care. The supervisor has attended training and is due to implement in-house training, with support from the outside training team, for the staff with regards to safeguarding children. Documentation is available to support the recording of concerns and the relevant contact information is available.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy attending the pre-school and leave parents confidently. Staff welcome children into the group and move around the setting with the children supporting their learning. Children have access to a good range of resources and equipment which are easily accessible in low level storage. Staff support children well in some activities, such as the book area, taking time to read to children and extend their language skills. However, other areas are less well supported, such as the mark making table. Children participate in small and large group activities, learning to build relationships with their peers and the adults. Children enjoy the various methods of using paint, such as the fine brushes and pots with foam tips, but have limited opportunities to use their imagination with a range of other resources or collage materials. The majority of staff have attended the Birth to three matters training but this is not always implemented effectively. At present a key person system is not in place, therefore not fully promoting children's individual learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff show an understanding of the areas of learning and have arranged the room and resources to reflect these. They make regular observations of children's achievements and use a tick list to ensure all areas of development are observed within the term. However, they are in the process of adopting a new method of planning and observation to implement the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This has resulted in plans not being fully implemented or completed to meet the individual needs of the children, by identifying their next steps in their development. Staff are making observations of children's achievements and summarising them once a term to provide a statement under the four themes of the EYFS. They work together as a team to decide where children are with their learning and how they can offer activities to promote children's interests. However, this is not addressing all children's needs at present and many children are not being provided with a challenge. The assessment record is shared with parents, which includes the observations staff have recorded. A system for parents to share what children are achieving at home is soon to be introduced which will help support children's learning and development whilst in the pre-school.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted through regular use of the outdoor area. Children are able to observe bulbs growing into flowers and watch the wildlife, such as birds and squirrels using the large trees in the garden. Children play on grass and can walk through the leaves, enjoying the noise. They enjoy splashing in puddles with their

wellingtons and use sand to explore and investigate. Children have regular opportunities to use the computers, although at present these are not working. They enjoy using the variety of construction materials to build, construct and join, playing on their own or in small groups. Children use the role play area and act out familiar roles from home, such as shopping with the shopping trolley, or cooking the meals. They can access different forms of painting, and have some access to collage materials. However, art and craft activities to promote children's imagination and creative skills are limited.

Children have access to resources to promote their numeracy skills, counting the people in the wooden boats and linking the quantity to the number on the front of the boat. They match and sort by colour, shape and size and are able to identify differences and similarities. Children enjoy using the small pegs to make patterns in the boards, with some children identifying 2D shapes. At present children do not have access to a number line and have limited opportunities to use their numeracy skills and problem solving in daily routine activities. Adults miss opportunities to extend children's learning such as the child counting to 21 when drying up the cups. However, children do count how many girls and boys there are during circle time, although this is not supported by showing children the written number to enable children to make links. Children's fine physical skills are fully promoted throughout the day. The majority of children have good pincer grips when holding the pencils or fine paint brushes. They pick up small pegs individually and place them carefully in the holes in the board when making a pattern. Children complete different style jigsaws with accuracy and practice doing their coat fastenings when putting on coats to go outside.

Children enjoy the book area. They share books well with each other and become fully engaged when adults sit and read stories to them. Children identify pictures within the book, which helps extend their language skills. However, there are few occasions when children are encouraged to link sounds to letters or become aware of print in their environment. Children have no access to the alphabet around the walls and are not encouraged to identify familiar everyday words, such as the days of the week during circle time. Children recognize their names on their place mats, but have little opportunity to ascribe meanings to marks in the continuous provision, such as the role play area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have opportunities to develop their understanding of society through celebrating different cultural celebrations, such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year. Children use various resources which portray positive images of diversity, with several pictures around the room supporting children's understanding. Staff ensure they obtain full information about children's family circumstances and their personal details, such as language spoken at home to ensure they can meet the child's needs. All children are fully integrated into the setting, with children with additional need, being supported by an individual educational plan. Parents and outside professionals work with the staff to implement activities and strategies to support children's development. Children learn about accepting and understanding each others differences and similarities and children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children learn about right and wrong with support from staff, who offer reminders on a regular basis about the rules within the setting. Rules are written up on a display board with pictorial aids to help children remember the rules of the setting. Although children are able to understand them, they sometimes forget to implement them, such as running indoors. Occasionally, some children present boisterous behaviour when activities do not provide sufficient challenge or

engage their interest, resulting in disruption to other children's concentration and causing upset to others. Staff are aware of this and ensure children are given a simple explanation as to why their behaviour is not acceptable. Staff are in the process of reviewing their planning and room layout to prevent unacceptable behaviour.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive newsletters informing them of future dates and changes within the pre-school, although they have only received one since the pre-school have moved into the new building in November. Parents are informed about their child's progress through sharing their developmental records with them and asking for any comments they may wish to make. However, at present the staff are in the process of changing the way they plan and assess children's learning. Therefore, the information parents receive is minimal and does not always accurately demonstrate where children are at in their development. Parents are informed about the policies within the setting and are given the uncollected policy and complaints policy with the information pack, although contact details for Ofsted are incorrect. Parents are asked to give consent for aspects of care such as short trips away from the pre-school and photographs promoting children's welfare.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a team of staff who are qualified and welcome children into the setting. The supervisor and staff team are aware of their responsibilities and roles within the pre-school and attend training to update their skills and knowledge. However, not all training has been effectively implemented into the setting to support children's developmental needs within all areas of their learning. Parents are kept informed about their child's time within the pre-school through access to their development records, although a key person system has not yet been established. This prevents children's progress being monitored fully and a secure relationship between the child, the parent and the key person from being effectively implemented.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The pre-school is run by a committee who have a good understanding of their roles regarding the employment and on-going suitability of the staff working in the pre-school. An appraisal system is in the process of becoming established, with the chairperson appraising the supervisor, who in turn will appraise the staff within the pre-school. A new system of planning and assessment is being implemented into the setting, which has resulted in a weakness in the education the funded children are receiving. The lack of a formal monitoring system reflects the inconsistencies in the activities and experiences offered to all the children, resulting in some children not being offered a challenge or able to extend their skills in all areas, especially communication, language and literacy and their mathematical skills.

All documentation is in place, with written policies available for parents. Many of these are in the process of being updated to ensure they reflect current practice and the necessary information for parents. Children's attendance is recorded, with times of late arrival or departure being recorded in the signing in book, which helps support children's well-being in the event of an emergency evacuation. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four recommendations from the previous care inspection. These were to review the organisation of the sessions and staff deployment, so that when staff's time is taken by visitors,

children continue to receive sufficient adult attention. The pre-school is now in a new building with a new supervisor and staff deployment has been taken into consideration to ensure children's support and attention is not affected by visitors to the setting. The second recommendation was to provide children with fruit and vegetables at snack time, which is fully implemented and children are given a good range of healthy options for snacks. The setting was asked to ensure parents are informed about the complaints policy and informed about their child's developmental records. Parents now receive the complaints policy when their children start, (although the contact information for Ofsted is not correct at present) and have regular access to their child's developmental records. Finally, the setting was asked to develop staff's understanding and knowledge of child protection. The staff are all due to receive in-house training with the support of an external training co-ordinator and the supervisor to ensure all staff have a good awareness about safeguarding children.

There were two recommendations from the education report. Develop an effective method of observation and assessment; use these to inform the planning to plan children's next steps in their development. Ensure parents are kept informed and have the opportunity to contribute to their child's assessment records. This is on-going from this inspection as the group are now implementing an additional way of planning to implement the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting was also asked to expand the plans to ensure the long, medium and short term plans interlink and provide a broad curriculum, using the new experiences and continuous basic provision, detailing the adults role and differentiation. This is also on-going from this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider of 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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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):

- ensure fire drills are carried out on a regular basis on different times and days to ensure all children understand the evacuation process
- implement a 'key person' system to ensure all children's individual needs can be met

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):

- continue to develop a system of planning, through regular observation and assessment, to plan children's next steps in their development, to inform future planning, ensuring all six areas are given equal consideration
- promote and develop children's literacy and numeracy skills through practical activities and daily routines
- ensure activities are planned to meet children's individual interests and are differentiated to provide sufficient challenge (also applies to care)

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