

Daisy Chain Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127137
Inspection date	12 December 2007
Inspector	Cilla Rachel Mullane
Setting Address	Whitstable Community College, Bellevue Road, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1PX
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Registered person	The Trustees of Daisy Chain Nursery School
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Daisy Chain Nursery School opened in April 1995, and is managed by a committee. It operates from a classroom in the Whitstable Community College, in Whitstable. The nursery school has access to one room, toilets, a kitchen area and an outside area. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding towns.

There are currently 24 children on the roll. This includes 19 funded children. Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The staff have experience of working with children who have learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery school opens 5 mornings a week, term time only. Sessions are from 09.15 to 12.00. There is also a session on Thursday afternoons, from 12.45 to 15.15.

There are three staff who work with the children. All of these hold an early years qualifications. They all attend short courses on a regular basis. The group receives support from an early years advisor.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learning about the importance of personal hygiene, and looking after themselves independently. They take tissues and dispose of them in the bin. They use the toilet and wash their hands without help. Clear pictures of toileting routines remind the children of the importance of keeping themselves clean. Staff are attentive to hygiene. For example, they record regular checks on the cleanliness of the toilet area, and clean the tables with antibacterial spray before serving snacks. Therefore children are protected from the spread of infection. Most staff hold current first aid qualifications, so have the knowledge to care for children well in an emergency.

Healthy eating and healthy choices are well promoted. At snack times children enjoy food such as tangerines, and staff help them to learn what is good for them, discussing how vitamins help them to grow. Parents have been involved in the planning of the snack menu: they completed questionnaires and provided ideas. Children are able to keep their bodies hydrated because there is a jug of water on the side from which they help themselves. Their ability to act independently is further promoted at snack time, when they use knives to butter their toast, and pour their own drinks.

Children take part in physical activity daily. Outside play is a daily feature of the routine, and indoor activities are often continued in the fresh air. For example, during a role play activity children put on postal workers uniforms over their coats to 'deliver the mail' outside. Music and movement sessions are imaginative, and during these sessions children are encouraged to think about the effect of exercise on their bodies. They listen to their breathing and feel their hearts, and are therefore learning about the benefits of exercise. Children use their large muscle groups when riding trikes and completing obstacle courses.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The environment is welcoming to children, and carefully planned so children have access to toys and equipment covering all areas of learning. They can be creative with craft materials, or act out scenarios in the role play area. Construction materials are well organised in boxes, and the interest table is fascinating, with magnifying glasses to examine shells and other natural materials. Non-fiction books about frogs and tadpoles, rocks and minerals add to the interest. Although the environment is stimulating, space is not used to maximum effect. For example, some surfaces are cluttered, and the seating in the book area is covered with soft toys. The toilets do not have doors, so children are not afforded privacy and dignity when using this area.

Children are safe within the nursery school. Children are learning to keep themselves safe, for example, staff drew children's attention to what would happen if they joined in the dancing with their shoes undone. They carry scissors carefully with the blades pointing downwards. There are safe procedures for arrival and collections, so children are kept secure within the room at these times. Fire drill records show which children were absent, so another practice can include all children. Staff employ careful procedures to keep the children safe. For example, they are especially vigilant when the children go up and down the steps into the outside area. The committee checks the accident record for patterns, so hazards are therefore eliminated.

Children are safeguarded from harm and neglect because management are taking steps to ensure all staff, and some committee members, update child protection training. The recently updated and very thorough safeguarding children procedure informs staff accurately regarding local procedures. Children are further protected, as a record is kept of accidents which take place in their own homes.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and secure, confident and having fun. Warm and caring staff are skilled at interacting with the children, responding to them and playing with them. Children laughed loudly when they put shaving foam on a member of staff's nose. Activities change throughout the session, according to plans, but also in response to children's requests and interests. Recent stimulating and enjoyable activities have included a picnic which was initiated by the children, handprint trees and leaf biscuits, role play activities such as going on holiday with passports and working in a sorting office addressing and posting letters. Therefore children are enjoying learning from a range of relevant and exciting experiences.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children are interested and confident, motivated and keen to explore. They are learning independently, initiating their own learning, concentrating and persevering, and learning at their own pace. Activities are led by children's interests, and develop through the week as staff observe the children, and see what interests them. Staff are good at talking to children and supporting their play, but also know when to let them develop activities on their own, for example, providing props for a picnic or a camp. There is a good variety of interesting and imaginative activities, such building with little bricks, cement and trowels, sand painting, 'slime' and soap flakes, using their imaginations during music and movement, so children are learning using all their senses. Staff are adept at developing activities according to children's interests, for example, a post office activity continued outside, with children delivering and posting letters. The environment is carefully set out so that children can choose toys and equipment, or initiate their own activities and learn at their own pace, or they can learn new skills when joining in adult directed activities, such as making Christmas decorations.

As a result of effective teaching, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children are acting independently, for example, they are proud when they succeed at putting on their coats. They are motivated to experiment and explore, such as when they mix colours on their hands at the easel, or find out what sinks or floats in the water. They confidently ask for resources to be brought out, and help carry the boxes. Children are using their imaginations during music and movement sessions, for example, pretending to creep downstairs to see what Santa has left. Access to craft materials enables children to independently design collages with glitter and glue.

Their knowledge and understanding of the world is increasing as they examine shells and other natural materials on the interest table, and discuss how the postal service works. They watch the activity of the worms in the wormery with interest. They know which rubbish needs to be put into the recycling bin. They go over to the main school to look at historical displays made

by the children there. Their understanding of mathematical concepts is increasing as staff constantly refer to numbers and shapes, and help them think about calculation through songs such as 'five little men in a flying saucer'. Children have frequent opportunities to count, for example, counting five star jumps during music and movement.

Children's communication, language and literacy skills are progressing. They love listening to stories, especially with puppets and props, and join in enthusiastically. They are encouraged to make 'their mark' on their work, and some write their names, so they know that the written word has meaning, and can label and recognize their own work. Staff sometimes draw children's attention to the first letter of words, and children are enjoying thinking about words that rhyme, and staff intend to develop the teaching of phonics for children who are ready.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual learning needs are met because staff use observations to plan their next steps, so activities are based on their interests and abilities. Staff make the most of opportunities to discuss diversity in society. For example, children enjoyed activities which helped them to think about travelling families. Children are helped to think about equality of opportunity: during a post office role play activity staff reminded them that both men and women can become postal workers.

Children behave well, and are learning about right and wrong. Staff use puppets to model good and thoughtful behaviour. They are delighted when Sooty reminds them to say thankyou, and when Reggie asks them to sit down to listen. Children are sharing toys spontaneously: for example, they invite friends to share the play dough. Staff show their appreciation of children's achievements and efforts, so children are proud of their work, showing paintings to staff and visitors.

Children who have learning difficulties and disabilities are cared for sensitively. Trained staff are able to identify special needs, and have a variety of experience of working with children with learning difficulties. They have established links with other professionals, and know where to go for advice and support.

Partnership with parents is good.

Staff form good, supportive relationships with parents, who appreciate the friendly and welcoming atmosphere, the quality of the activities provided, and the fact that their children enjoy attending the setting. Parents are given good quality information about the curriculum for the Foundation Stage both in the prospectus, and in their children's folders, and are therefore well-informed. Furthermore, parents are invited to open days, where staff set up activities, with activity plans which explain what children learn, and how. Children's folders with observations and notes on progress are shared with parents frequently. Parents complete an initial profile of their child when they first attend the nursery school, so their progress is evident from the folders. They are able to continue their children's learning at home, as they get information about activities from the notice board, and leaflets on subjects such as how to encourage writing skills. They know about the complaints procedure because, again, they have received a letter informing them about how to complain, if necessary. Parents views regarding the care and education provided are sought, for example via questionnaires.

Children's social, moral and spiritual development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery school meets the needs of the range of children for whom care and education are provided.

The staff are well qualified, so children are cared for by knowledgeable practitioners. Furthermore, all staff regularly attend a variety of short courses, such as 'unlocking outdoors' and 'the environment as the third teacher'. The pace of the sessions and the routine meet the needs of the children. For example, they recognise the music which means that they have time to finish their work before they tidy up. Staff organise their time well, providing opportunities for children to select toys and equipment and initiate their own activities, setting up adult led activities, and making themselves available to support play.

The documentation required by the National Standards is in place, and maintained to a high standard.

Leadership and management is good.

The management committee is supportive and clear of its role. For example, members are involved in setting and reviewing policies and procedures, and meetings are professionally minuted. The staff team have a range of talents, and the supervisor has a good awareness of who is good at what, which enhances the care and education of the children. A self evaluation folder is in place, which includes a bi-termly report which is used effectively as a tool used to identify where changes and improvements are needed. Excellent systems are established to review, monitor and evaluate the nursery education. Weekly meetings enable staff to successfully plan for individual children, and help to ensure that all staff are aware of children's intended next steps. Tick lists are used to good effect for the planning of activities: they enable staff to check that all areas of the curriculum are covered, and the list of children's observations makes sure that they observe all children in each of the six areas of learning. Children's folders show their starting points, and the entries show parents what their children have achieved. Activity planning is shared by all staff using children's identified next steps, so activities and resources meet children's individual needs.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, it was recommended that the nursery school consider ways of giving children a warning prior to 'tidy up time'. Children are able to finish their work, as they recognize the music which indicates it is time to clear up. It was also recommended that children should act more independently at snack time. The promotion of independence is now considered at snack time.

At the last inspection of nursery education it was recommended that the setting continue to develop the use of assessment to inform planning, and extend the challenges for more able children. Activities are planned according to children's needs and interests, and all children are appropriately challenged. Lastly, the setting agreed to formalise arrangements to assess the settings own strengths and weaknesses and the educational programme. There are now effective systems in place.

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):

- improve the use of space within the nursery school, and ensure children are afforded privacy and dignity when using the toilet.

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 the teaching of phonics.

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