

Barn Owls Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY361933 |
| Inspection date | 29 April 2008 |
| Inspector | Bridget Copson |
| Setting Address | Barnhayes Farm, Frome St. Quintin, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 0HG |
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| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Sarah Jayne Coombs |
| 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

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?

Barn Owls Nursery opened in 2004 under previous ownership. It is situated in a first floor extension of a working dairy farm in the village of Frome St Quintin, between Dorchester, Dorset and Yeovil, Somerset. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is privately owned and is open each weekday, from 08.00 to 18.00, for 51 weeks of the year. Children have use of an enclosed garden, the tennis court and a large grassed area for outdoor activities.

There are currently 36 children, aged from two to under eight years, on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the surrounding rural areas. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery owner holds the Montessori teaching qualification and the NVQ Level 3 in childcare and education. She employs six members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for within a clean and hygienic environment. Staff have good systems in place to prevent the spread of infection. For example, daily cleaning and disinfecting routines using colour-coded cloths, preparing foods on colour-coded chopping boards and regular hand washing. Children wash their hands before all meal and snack times and after outdoor play. They also brush their teeth after meals. This supports them well in understanding the importance of good personal hygiene.

Children benefit from a nutritious range of meals and snacks throughout the day. For example, they use a menu to choose fresh fruits and breadsticks or crackers at their café-style break time, with drinks of water or milk. Children enjoy a balanced and freshly cooked lunch, with weekly menus informing parents of what will be provided, for example, fish, chicken, pasta and rice dishes with fresh vegetables and fruit. They have access to a water dispenser at all times to ensure they do not get thirsty. Children's health and fitness is promoted well. They benefit from fresh air and exercise every day in the three outdoor play areas which provide different activities and play equipment, suitable for all ages and abilities. In poorer weather, they join in music and movement sessions indoors.

Children's health is further promoted through the records and documentation kept. This ensures dietary needs are met and records of any accidents and incidents and medication are signed by parents for consistency of care. All full-time staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and a first aid kit is kept on the premises to support staff in caring for children appropriately in the event of an accident.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for within a warm and welcoming environment, which is organised effectively to allow them to move freely and safely between play areas. They have open access to well-maintained play provision which is all age appropriate to promote safe and independent play.

Children are kept safe and secure in most areas through the supervision and safety measures in place. Staff complete risk assessments for all areas and any additional activities, such as, trips to the farm milking shed. Children learn about keeping safe through practical activities and staff guidance. For example, practising the fire evacuation procedure, how to behave on walks, managing the steps safely and using craft tools responsibly.

Children's welfare is safeguarded in most areas of the provision. Staff are clear of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection issues and the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns. In addition, records are kept to support staff in protecting children, such as accurate staff and child attendance times, existing injury records, details of all visitors and alternative collection arrangements for children. However, the employment procedures are not implemented consistently to ensure staff are vetted thoroughly in all areas to further protect children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy and settle in quickly with the warm welcome and support from staff. They are developing a good sense of well-being and self-esteem which is promoted effectively by staff who know them well. Children are developing good early independence skills, but are also well-supported by staff who provide one-to-one time for play, cuddles and a close presence when they are resting. They are encouraged to move about freely and choose toys to support their own interests. For example, some children choose to spend long periods in the creative play room, some read many books in the book area and others make good use of the home corner for role play.

Children are developing good communication skills. They are learning to listen well at appropriate times and show their pleasure and pride openly with staff and friends. Younger children's learning and development is planned alongside those in receipt of nursery education funding, with links to the Birth to three matters framework. However, the setting is implementing a new planning system which has not yet incorporated an appropriate learning framework for the younger children. In addition, assessments of their progress have not been updated recently to ensure their next steps of learning are planned.

The holiday club provides children with a range of activities linked to all areas of their development. Staff plan themes ahead as a focus and encourage children to contribute their thoughts and ideas, according to their interests. This supports children in creating a club they enjoy and want to attend.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children's learning is promoted appropriately by staff who have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They interact with enthusiasm and listen well to children's responses, asking questions to encourage them to think and share their knowledge. They know most children well and provide some support and extension to keep them progressing. However, they are not familiar with the new planning systems and are not always clear what they intend children to learn from activities. Children's progress is monitored by staff who use assessment files to record their achievements in each area of learning. However, these are not updated regularly to reflect each child's current stage of development. In addition, their next steps of learning are not planned or linked to planning to ensure appropriate challenges are provided to support and extend children in all areas.

Children are interested and enjoy new experiences. They focus well and play for long periods with things they enjoy. They are forming early friendships with peers whom they seek out to play and sit with and are learning to work together with others. Although they are learning some self-care skills, many tasks are carried out by staff. This does not support older children in preparation for school. Children communicate with confidence and talk freely about what they are doing, home life, in their role play and contribute to stories told. They are learning to listen well, for example, in music sessions and when others are talking. Children make good use of the well-organised and resourced book area where they choose favourite stories to read alone or with staff and friends. They have opportunities to write and mark make with a purpose in several areas of the setting to support early handwriting skills.

Children are developing a suitable understanding of numbers. They count in songs, with staff and spontaneously in their play. They are learning about shape and position and use this information to complete puzzles. Children make good use of the natural environment around their setting to explore the countryside, growth and change. For example, rural walks, aspects of farm life, the growth of lambs and tadpoles and plant life. However, they do not have many opportunities to explore the cultures and lives of others. Children do not have independent access to a good range of resources to promote their understanding of information and communication technology.

Children benefit from a good range of large and small scale physical play provision in the outdoor play areas as well as activities indoors. They move with control and coordination when using the equipment and can move as instructed in adult-led activities. Children use a range of one-handed tools freely around the playrooms to develop their hand-eye coordination. They use their imaginations well in creative activities, using different materials and media to create and construct. They use the well-resourced home corner for role play and have access to many creative materials and tools to promote independent learning. Children enjoy music and join in singing and weekly music sessions with enthusiasm, exploring sounds, rhythm and song.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met with care through records and good communication with parents and the family group key worker system. Parents also complete 'favourite things' forms for staff to support them in settling their child into the group and promoting their interests. The setting has a designated special educational needs coordinator. She has established links with parents and external agencies to promote consistency of care and learning for children with additional needs. Children are developing a very good sense of belonging. For example, they know to self-register on arrival, have named pegs, see photographs of themselves around the rooms and have their own special events celebrated. They also have their own celebration books detailing photographs and examples of their work.

Children behave well. They are learning about positive attitudes and what is expected of them. For example, they show good manners, are helpful to others and are learning to share and take turns. Staff promote a positive environment in which they work calmly and consistently, make expectations clear, act as good examples and offer children lots of encouragement and praise.

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

Staff have established good partnerships with parents for consistency of care. Parents receive an informative prospectus with the setting information, staff details and the policies and procedures. However, this does not include any details of the frameworks used to plan and promote children's learning. Parents complete records, consent sheets and personal information to support staff in meeting their child's needs well. They are kept well-informed through notices displayed, access to the policies and procedures, newsletters and good daily communication. Labelled pigeon holes are used to ensure all parents have been informed. To further improve links with parents, staff are implementing two-way communication booklets to inform them of their child's activity and care each day.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery education funding is satisfactory. Parents are provided with some opportunities to get involved in their child's learning, such as displays of themes. However, they are not involved in contributing details of

their child's starting point on admission to support staff in forming early assessments. In addition, they are not invited to discuss their child's progress or look at their records on a more formal basis within the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a consistent team of staff who all hold early years qualifications to support them in caring for children appropriately. The setting has appropriate employment and vetting procedures, however, these are not implemented consistently. Not all background checks are carried out thoroughly to assess staff suitability and safeguard children effectively.

Children are cared for within an organised environment where staff communicate and work together efficiently to maintain ratios and provide children with different play environments and a peaceful area to rest. Staff have some systems in place to monitor the quality of care provided, such as staff meetings, links with the local authority, risk assessments and action plans. Children's records and related documentation is stored securely to maintain confidentiality. However, not all documentation is well-organised to maintain the safe management of the setting. For example, staff files are incomplete and some staff meeting minutes are missing.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff have some systems in place to monitor the quality of nursery education and its strengths and weaknesses. For example, action plans and reports from the local authority. However, there is no system for evaluating the planning to ensure all areas of learning are promoted well and for monitoring staff's understanding of this. In addition, there is no system of monitoring use of the children's assessments or parents' involvement in their child's learning. The setting shows a commitment to improvement by acting on any recommendations raised by their own action plans or from external agencies. They are currently forming links with the two main schools children attend to support them in their transition through school.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable: this is the first inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- implement the employment and vetting procedures fully to ensure all aspects of staff's suitability are vetted
- improve the organisation of records to promote the safe management of the provision.

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):

- improve systems for monitoring and assessing children's progress to ensure they are encouraged to develop to their full potential in all areas
- ensure children's next steps of learning are planned and linked to future planning to provide them with meaningful challenges in all areas
- develop system for monitoring all aspects of the quality of nursery education.

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