

Dorchester Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	134311
Inspection date	23/06/2009
Inspector	Lynda Walker
Setting address	Dorchester St. Birinus C of E School, Queen Street, Dorchester-on-Thames, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 7HR
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Dorchester Pre-School was established approximately 30 years ago and is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and carers. It operates from purpose-built premises situated in the grounds of St Birinus Church of England Primary School in the village of Dorchester-on-Thames, near Wallingford. The intake of children is from the village and surrounding rural community. The pre-school opens on weekdays in term time from 09.00 until 11.45. An optional lunch club operates on some days and afternoon sessions are offered on Monday and Wednesday from 13.00 until 15.00. Dorchester Pre-School is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 20 children from 2 years to the end of the early years age range may attend at any one time and there are currently 39 children on roll. Of these, 26 are in receipt of nursery education funding. The pre-school employs six members of staff, all of whom have National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 or NVQ at level 2 early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of Dorchester Pre-School is outstanding.

The children really enjoy their time at the pre-school as they play happily together in a safe, welcoming and attractive environment, where a strong emphasis is placed on their care and safety. The pre-school offers an outstanding variety of interesting learning experiences for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These activities effectively develop the children's knowledge and skills and enable them to make excellent progress in their learning. The partnership with parents and staff are a key strength that enables children's individual needs to be met to a high standard. The capacity to make further improvement is excellent as practitioners have robust and accurate systems for self-evaluation. For example, they have already identified the need to develop further staff communication systems to ensure greater consistency.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- continue to improve staff communication systems in order to ensure consistent practice

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The provision is extremely well organised, with an excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities to encourage the children's independent learning

and the development of their self-care skills. All legally required documentation is carefully maintained and easily available to those entitled to see them. Staff are effectively deployed, so that children are well supervised and supported at all times. A key worker system, ensures that good links between home and the setting are consolidated. All staff act as very positive role models. They know the children well, appreciate their differing needs and understand their varying abilities, so that every child is valued and treated as an individual.

Staff work well together as a team, and are clearly committed to ensuring that all children in their care are well looked after and enjoy the excellent range of choices on offer. There is a detailed range of policies and procedures in place that are used effectively by all practitioners. Safeguarding procedures within the centre are robust. All staff are aware of their responsibilities and roles in relation to keeping children safe and the clear systems for staff recruitment, training, risk assessment and evaluation support this. As a result, children's welfare is promoted extremely well.

Effective partnerships have been fostered with parents and they speak very highly of the provision. Children's starting points and interests are identified in partnership with parents and used by staff to help children settle. Daily discussions, development records, parents' evenings and notices keep parents well informed about their child's learning and development.

Staff meetings are used to review practice and procedures so that all staff are given the opportunity to contribute ideas for improvement. There are very well established links with outside agencies. The setting responds to support and advice from other professionals which has had a positive impact on the overall quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision and the outcomes for all children. As a result, all issues identified at the last inspection have been successfully addressed.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The highly competent and enthusiastic team are consistently well deployed to support the children's welfare and learning. They know the children well, and treat each child as a valued individual and have a clear understanding of their differing abilities and interests. Children are provided with an excellent range of opportunities to help them make good progress across all areas of learning and development.

Activities are evaluated to a high standard. Staff consistently observe and assess children's learning. They use their written evidence together with photographs of the children engaged in activities in order to complete individual profiles and to identify the next steps in learning. This enables children's learning to develop according to their own needs and abilities. There is effective coverage of all areas of learning and a strong emphasis is placed upon the development of literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. The pre-school manager liaises with the main school staff in order to ensure that continuity of learning and development is promoted fully.

The very well organised indoor and outdoor environments enable children to

become independent learners, which develops their confidence effectively. They make many choices, initiate their own activities and play imaginatively with the resources available. Children show a good level of interest in what they do. They play for long periods of time with the toys and resources and are fully engaged. Staff present activities in an enjoyable and motivating way; they make links between the activities and children's own ideas and play interests and extend these through talk. As a result, their imagination and creativity is are well supported.

Comprehensive systems are in place to promote children's safety within the setting. Visitors are monitored and staff ensure that children are appropriately supervised at all times. Risk assessments for each activity are carried out and the pre-school manager ensures that the premises and equipment are safe prior to children's arrival at each session.

All staff hold current first aid certificates and systems are in place to ensure they can respond swiftly and effectively in the event of an accident or emergency. Through routines and discussion, children learn and practise good personal hygiene.

Staff promote a safe and healthy environment where appropriate facilities are in place to meet the children's personal needs and support their independence. Risk assessments are reviewed and updated to ensure the safety of the children.

Children successfully learn about the wider world through everyday play and discussion. They have superb opportunities to enhance their skills for the future as they use the computer, play games together and enjoy visits from the local fire brigade and other service providers. Children are happy and settled in the provision. The sessions are exceptionally well planned with a good balance of adult-led activities which introduce them to new experiences, and child-initiated play which enables them to freely express themselves. Staff are skilled in supporting children's learning, providing support to those who need it, enabling them to participate in their chosen activity and allowing others the space and opportunities to explore, investigate and create; alone or with their peers.

Staff have formed good relationships with the children who confidently state their views and opinions. Parents spoken to during the inspection were all unanimous in their praise of the provision and spoke highly of the staff and their commitment to ensuring that the children had fun and enjoyed themselves.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met