



Dorchester Community Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	139333
Inspection date	23 February 2006
Inspector	Brenda Joan Flewitt
Setting Address	York Road, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1QA
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Registered person	Dorchester Community Nursery School Association
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?

Dorchester Community Nursery School was established over 30 years ago and operates from a purpose built building situated near the centre of the main town of Dorchester, Dorset. The nursery has sole use of the premises. The accommodation comprises of an entrance hall, kitchen and office, a main play room, an adjoining smaller room, and toilet facilities for staff and children. There is a fully enclosed area for outside play, part of which is covered, and an enclosed garden which is used by

children for growing and planting.

This is a community nursery, and places are offered to children who come from a range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and children who have English as an additional language. The nursery is open during term time only, Monday to Friday from 09:15 until 11:45, and from 13:00 until 15:30 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons. Lunch time sessions are usually offered in addition to the mornings.

A maximum of 32 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 61 children on roll. Of these, 54 receive funding for nursery education. A team of four staff work with children, all of whom hold or are studying towards a relevant level 3 qualification or above. The manager is a qualified primary teacher, and one member of staff is studying towards a Foundation Degree in Early Years. The team are supported by a bursar and a cleaner.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop independence in managing their own personal hygiene as the resources are easily accessible to them. Through daily routine, children learn to wash their hands after using the toilet and before handling food. Children are protected from the spread of infection through staff procedures that include regular hygienic cleaning routines, and a policy which makes clear to parents that children must not attend if they are ill. Children's accidents are dealt with appropriately as all staff are trained to carry out first aid, and clear records are kept. However, first aid resources are not always replenished, and parental permission for seeking medical advice or treatment in an emergency is not in place. This compromises children's health in an emergency situation.

Children learn about healthy eating through topic work and discussion. They know what foods are good for them or which ones are bad for their teeth. Children are offered a drink at snack time together with a piece of fruit but, at other times, they must ask for a drink if they are thirsty as resources are not easily available. Children are involved in a good range of activities that promote physical development. They enjoy fresh air on a daily basis as they use the outside area and large equipment. They practise skills in climbing, sliding and manoeuvring vehicles as well as playing ball games.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where most hazards and risks are identified and minimised. The premises are well maintained and the effective security system means that children are protected from un-invited visitors

and cannot leave the premises unsupervised. There are measures in place to help prevent accidents, such as guards around heaters and safe storage of hazardous substances. However, there are occasions when children are put at risk as staff carry hot drinks from the kitchen into the main activity room.

Children move around with confidence and in safety as they choose their activities. The room is arranged well into various areas of play, and staff are vigilant in their supervision. Children use a good range of appropriate furniture and resources which are well maintained and organised to allow children to access their activities safely.

Children learn what must happen if they have to leave the building in an emergency as they are involved in regular fire drills. They learn about staying safe when crossing roads through role play and discussion. Staff's secure knowledge of child protection issues and the Area Child Protection Committee procedures contributes towards children's safety and welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright, colourful and welcoming environment. Staff are friendly, and caring and have good knowledge of how children learn through play. This means that children are happy, settled and secure. They are keen to come to nursery and enjoy the time they spend there. They develop confidence to make their needs known as they can be sure of a kind response. Children develop their independence skills well in most areas.

Children make good relationships with staff and each other, and enjoy the positive interaction they receive from adults working with them. They are involved in a wide range of interesting activities that promote learning in all areas of development. Staff are developing the planning of activities and assessment of progress for younger children in line with the Birth to three matters framework.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage, which they use to plan a broad range of stimulating learning experiences. The planning clearly links with the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

Children are developing a good awareness of themselves as members of a community, for example through the topic 'All about me.' They learn about the world around them through a variety of activities that include visitors coming in to the group, such as a dentist and people with animals. Children explore festivals including Diwali and Chinese New Year, when they like to taste new foods, dress in costume and dance to relevant music. They enjoy acting out real life situations through role play, like booking a holiday at the 'Travel Agent's' or ordering a Chinese meal.

Children use language well to communicate. They enjoy chatting to each other and staff about events in their lives, some are confident to speak in a group. For example,

children listen with interest as a child talks about her recent birthday celebrations. They like to hear stories both in big or small groups. Children often select a book to share with a friend when they relax in the comfortable designated area. They are learning to recognise their written names through the self-registration system. They use this knowledge to 'write' their name on their work or during their play, such as lists or orders in the role play area.

Children start to develop a sense of number, shape, comparison and measure through planned activities including games, songs, cooking and topic work. Children compare how tall they are or the height of plants they have grown. However, they do not always hear the language or use these skills to solve mathematical problems during their everyday play or practical activities. Children move around with confidence and co-ordination showing an awareness of others as they choose activities and during their play. They use a wide range of large and small equipment that helps their physical development. This includes increasing skills in using one handed tools, such as pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and pegs.

Children explore using their senses through a variety of activities, such as craft, cooking and messy play. They learn about colours as they mix paints together, they use a range of materials to stick and create pieces of art and specific objects. For instance, a 4-year-old concentrates well as he selects items and designs a train with 'carriages.' He perseveres in cutting the card to his satisfaction. Children learn about nature as they take an active part in planting and caring for seeds as they grow, and keeping the outside area tidy. They are developing a good awareness of technology and how it is used in the environment. They practise mouse skills as they work through various computer programmes. Children are becoming competent in taking pictures with a digital camera, and proudly produce their pictures using the printer or photo-copier.

Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. The environment is well organised to promote children's free choice and concentration on their activities. Staff know children well and record regular observations of their achievements. They use these together with their knowledge of children's capabilities to help children progress. The observations are used to complete progress records; however, these are only completed twice a year. Therefore, they do not provide an on-going picture of a child's stage of development for parents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave very well. They know the routine and what is expected, such as washing hands and lining up quietly to move between areas. Children often highlight their own achievements to staff, which are duly rewarded. Children respond well to the praise and encouragement given by staff for effort and achievement both verbally and by way of a sticker system. For example, a child is pleased that he can fasten his coat by himself, and another child receives a sticker as he masters 'click and drag' on the computer. Children are made to feel important as their birthdays are celebrated, they like to blow out candles as their friends sing to them. Children develop a sense

of belonging as they look at photos in albums and on display where they can see themselves and other members of the group they recognise.

Children develop a positive awareness of a diverse society through topic work, and as they use resources that reflect positive images of different people and cultures. Children with additional needs are supported well. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator attends ongoing training and meetings. She liaises with staff, parents and other professionals consistently to ensure that each child's individual needs are met effectively and every child is fully included. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive appropriate information about the setting by way of a prospectus and regular newsletters which inform them about topics and events. They are invited to take an active part in decisions about their child's care and learning by being on the committee. They are also welcomed to attend and take part in sessions. Parents have daily opportunities to exchange information verbally as staff make themselves available at the beginning and end of each session. This contributes towards meeting children's individual needs. However, information about how the curriculum is delivered is not made readily available to parents. Parents are invited to discuss their child's progress by request but the written records do not consistently provide a clear picture of their child's stage of development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a small, well qualified and experienced staff team who work well together. They communicate constantly, which leads to smoothly run sessions, where children feel secure and settled. Leadership and management is good. The committee and staff are committed to providing good quality provision. For example, members of the committee organise successful fund raising events, which leads to improvement to the environment and equipment used by children. Staff are well supported to develop their roles through training. There is a clear staff recruitment procedure which ensures that newly appointed staff are suitable to work with children. The effective staff induction procedure makes sure that staff are well informed of their roles and responsibilities. This means that they carry out procedures, generally outlined in policies, that contribute towards children's care, learning and play. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The nursery staff enjoy good links with other settings and local schools, which means good practice is shared. This helps children's transition as they move on to school. All legally required documentation and records are in place and well organised, giving high priority to confidentiality. However, no written consent is obtained for seeking emergency treatment and some policies lack the required detail.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last Children Act inspection recommended that an effective system for recording the times of children's arrival and departure was developed; that all appropriate information is recorded in the accident book, including the time of the accident; and that the complaints procedure includes details of the regulatory body.

Staff have reviewed the registration system so that children's arrival and departure times which vary from the beginning and end of the sessions are clearly recorded. This meets the requirement and contributes towards children's safety. Accident records include all relevant information, and the complaints procedure informs parents of Ofsted contact details.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that activities were extended to provide additional challenges through practical everyday opportunities for more able children, enabling them to express and extend their ideas fully whilst practicing and developing their existing skills; and that further opportunities were provided for children to use and develop free expression within planned craft activities.

Children freely access a trolley containing craft and writing equipment as well as a painting easel, so they can extend their own ideas during self chosen activities. Most planned craft activities are less adult-directed, so children make choices and are proud of their own designs.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- make resources more easily available, so that children can easily access a

drink when they are thirsty

- ensure that children are not put at risk when hot drinks are transported
- obtain written parental permission, for each child, to seek medical advice or treatment in an emergency.

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):

- increase children's opportunities to solve mathematical problems through their play and practical activities
- review the assessment system, so that the records provide a clear and consistent picture of children's progress for parents.

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