



## Ducklings Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	140990
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 March 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Carol Johnstone
<b>Setting Address</b>	Methodist Church Hall, North Square,Chickerell, Weymouth, Dorset, DT3 4DX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01305 766920
<b>E-mail</b>	CHILDREN@DUCKLINGS.FSWORLD.CO.UK
<b>Registered person</b>	Ducklings Preschool
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. 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?

Ducklings Pre-School opened in 1993 and operates from a church hall in Chickerell, Weymouth. The pre-school is managed by a parent committee.

A maximum of 25 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open from 09:00 to 12:15 each weekday in term time only. A lunch club operates from 12:15 to 13:00 each day.

There is an enclosed area for outside play.

There are currently 25 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for nursery education.

The pre-school employs four staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications and are working towards obtaining further qualifications in childcare.

The pre-school support children with special needs.

The pre-school receive support from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are protected from illness in the pre-school as there are clear guidelines in place to advise parents of exclusion periods. If a child becomes unwell during the day they are made comfortable and kept away from the other children until parents arrive. This minimises the risk of any infection being spread to other children. Staff have a good understanding of hygiene at the pre-school. They use antibacterial spray to ensure that surfaces are clean and disposable gloves when giving first aid. Most staff hold current certificates in first aid and are able to assist children in the event of any accidents. There is a well equipped first aid box that is regularly checked. Children learn about their personal hygiene at the pre-school. They are very familiar with the pre-school routines and know they need to wash their hands before they have a snack. Most children do this independently without having to be reminded.

Children have very healthy snacks which they take as and when they wish. They choose from apples, bananas, raisins and milk. In addition they have independent access to water which they pour out themselves from the jug left on the snack table. Children learn about the benefits of healthy eating through group discussions and through the collages and books they have made on the subject. They grow vegetables from seeds to learn where healthy food comes from and they follow the growing process. Children have visits from the local dentist and learn how to care for their teeth. They also learn about the effects of exercise on their body, for example feeling how fast their hearts beat when they run.

Children have very good opportunities for physical play. They decide themselves when they want to play outside and have a variety of equipment to use including bikes, scooters, rickshaws, trolleys and cars. In addition they have balancing beams, balls, beanbags, hoops and traffic cones to negotiate around. Children use their fine motor skills very competently in the pre-school. They can push buttons, use woodworking tools, scissors, sellotape dispensers, cutters, rollers, pencils and paintbrushes.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are safe in the setting. The manager ensures that staff working with the children are appropriate to do so and have had thorough police and reference checks. In addition new staff have a probation period during which time they are observed to see if they work appropriately with the children. Children are protected from risk as students and parent helpers are never left alone with them or allowed to help with toilet duties.

Visitors to the setting are always asked to sign in and out and unauthorised access is prevented as the outside gate is always locked. There are daily risk assessments carried out to identify any potential hazards and these are dealt with swiftly. Staff ratios are always met and additional staff are deployed for outings. Staff are vigilant about any spills from the water tray and they deal with them immediately to prevent risk of falls. There are regular fire drills and these are constantly evaluated to see if any improvements are needed. There are very effective procedures taken when staff take children on outings. Children hold on to a rope during the time they are out to prevent any risk of them becoming lost. In addition staff wear yellow jackets so that they can be easily identified.

Children learn about their personal safety at the pre-school. They are taught how to use tools safely and are given clear instructions when using large equipment. There are visits from the local police officer and fire service who also talk to children about their personal safety. In addition there are regular sessions to teach the children about road safety. The pre-school have their own set of play traffic lights and a zebra crossing which children use to practise on.

Children would be very well protected in the event of a child protection concern arising as staff have a clear knowledge of the types and signs of abuse. Staff know to record any concerns and they are aware of which agencies to contact for assistance. There is a clear child protection policy to advise parents of the pre-school's responsibilities in this area. There is also more general information on child protection available to parents on the parent notice board.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a range of activities to choose from each day. These include role-play, craftwork, painting, water and sand play, dressing up, play dough and music. In addition there is a 'recall' time each day, where children have a more structured group activity with staff. During this time, children play word matching games or listen to particular stories that help them learn colour recognition. However, most of the activities at the pre-school are child led and children decide for themselves what they want to play with and for how long. For children under 3 years of age, there are specifically arranged activities using the Birth to three framework. In addition, activities and resources are adapted so that they are able to join in with the other children.

Nursery education

Children are very confident in the pre-school. They are comfortable with being able to make their own choices and decisions. They readily choose their activities and decide for themselves when to play outside and when to have a snack. Children have a sense of belonging to the preschool and are familiar with the routine of hanging their coats up as they arrive and going to sit on the carpet to wait for registration. Children make firm friendships in the pre-school. They play well together in pairs or in small groups. They also work well in a large group and are able to take turns to answer questions from the staff during 'recall' time. There is positive and friendly interaction between children and the staff. Children are proud of their achievements and express pleasure when they have finished a piece of work. Children are able to use their ideas freely during their creative play. They learn about colour and texture, for example choosing the colour of play dough to make that week. They enjoy music and are able to join in with ring games and remember familiar songs. Children use role-play effectively and build "houses" to play in from the large wooden blocks available. Children have sound spatial awareness and are able to avoid bumping into each other during their play. They are able to use a variety of movements which enhances their gross and fine motor development. Children show interest in numbers when prompted, however they do not often use numbers or mathematical language spontaneously during their play. Children are beginning to recognise some shapes in the environment. They are able to listen well in a group and they respond quickly to instructions. They use language effectively to express their ideas and explain what they are doing to their peers. They are beginning to understand the link between sounds and letters. Children are able to understand that certain words rhyme and are able to pick them out from groups of words that they hear. Children have free access to the writing table and a range of resources such as pencils and paper, however they are not mark making during activities where it would be appropriate to do so, for example during role play. Children enjoy looking at books and handle them carefully. They have favourite books that they ask for in 'recall' time and they can anticipate the next page of the story. Children enjoy choosing books from the 'library' to take home each day. Children learn about their local environment and make collages from leaves and twigs they have collected on walks. They learn to care for natural resources and use the paper shredder to recycle and reuse. There are also trips to the local recycling site. Children have free access to technology in the pre-school. There is a computer, calculators, cash registers and cameras. Children also enjoy using pressing the buttons to make the CD player work and they choose their own music and stories to play. Children learn about how things change when they are mixed. For example, they recently made pancakes and looked at how different the mixture was before and after it was cooked. Children are building strong links with their local community and there are regular visits to the local school where they can meet up with their old friends who have moved on. There are also firm links with the local church and children help to collect and distribute food parcels during harvest festival time.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are secure in their knowledge of the foundation stage and the areas of learning. However, they are sometimes inconsistent in using effective interaction to challenge and extend the children. During these times, the children do not fully engage and they start to become restless. There are also occasions where resources are not used

imaginatively to help children develop their ideas, for example not providing paper and pencils in the role play area where children could try and write 'shopping lists' and 'restaurant orders'. There are also times when children are not encouraged to use numbers and mathematical language during their play. Planning and assessments are satisfactory. All of the areas of learning are covered during most weeks. Children's assessments give a picture of where they are in their progress, although there are no starting points recorded on entry to the pre-school. Observations are completed regularly and staff understand what it is they are recording and why. The observations are used to help target areas for individual children and this is done effectively to help them progress.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn to respect and be kind to each other in the pre-school. They devise the "golden rules" together and make suggestions about how they should behave. Children apologise if they have hurt or upset another child. Children's behaviour is mostly settled. Staff base their behaviour management strategies on praising positive behaviour and dealing with negative behaviour in a low-key way. Parents are consulted and asked to work in conjunction with the pre-school if negative behaviour is ongoing.

Children learn about diversity and disability at the pre-school. They have recently celebrated the Chinese New Year. Children made a colourful dragon display for the wall, they were introduced to some Chinese writing and they tried Chinese food. Children also learn about others through using the resources available each day such as books and puzzles. Recently a visitor brought in a wheelchair for them to look at and discuss. Children who have special needs are well supported at the pre-school. There is a trained special needs coordinator who works closely with parents and with external agencies. She ensures that each child receives the necessary support and resources to enable them to feel included with the other children and join in with all of the activities.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are asked when a child starts to provide information about their medical history and family details. However, no details are obtained about what the child can already achieve when they start at the pre-school. There is positive and friendly interaction between staff and parents. There are newsletters each half term and review meetings twice a year. In addition there are regular parent questionnaires. There is a variety of information available on the parent notice board, however this is not always accessed by parents when they collect their children. Parents are not always told in the newsletters what activities are being covered until after they have occurred. Consequently the opportunities for them to be involved in their child's learning at home is limited. For parents of funded children, the information about the Foundation Stage and the areas of learning is not readily available unless a parent prospectus is asked for. Consequently parents do not always know about the areas of learning and how they are covered until the first review meeting. Parents feel that staff are very approachable and that they would be able to go to them with any concerns about their child.

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

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The manager ensures that the staff ratios are always met. She organises the space well to make sure that children have clearly defined areas to play in such as the book corner, role play area, craft area etc. Children are familiar with these areas and are able to move freely between them. Resources are very accessible and clearly marked so that children can help themselves to what they want.

There is a clear and comprehensive operational plan containing all necessary policies and procedures for the pre-school. Each member of staff determines the activities they will set up each day. This is dependant on the area of learning that they are concentrating on that week. However at times, some staff do not seem to have a clear plan of how they will arrange the activity and resources to fully engage the children.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. There have been recent staff changes resulting in a completely new team of staff. However, the manager is working hard to build a cohesive team and she is a clear and positive role model. The manager conducts regular performance appraisals to monitor the staff practice. She also regularly evaluates feedback from parent questionnaires and committee meetings. She encourages staff to develop their skills through personal training and also cascades her own expertise to them. She encourages staff to offer their ideas during regular team meetings. The manager is clearly committed to the children and to the provision provided.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection it was noted that some entries in the accident recording book were not signed. All entries are now signed by staff and by parents so that a clear picture of what happened can be obtained.

The visitors book was inconsistently completed at the last inspection. Staff now ensure that every visitor signs in and out to ensure that children are at no risk from unauthorised visitors.

At the last inspection, the raisins and fruit used at snack time were in a large bowl that was shared by the children. This meant that hygiene was not promoted. Children now receive individual boxes of raisins and whole pieces of fruit. This ensures that hygiene is promoted and there is no risk of cross contamination.

A point of consideration from the last nursery education report was that children had limited opportunities to climb. Following this, the pre-school purchased some new equipment which is used to encourage children to use climbing movements both

indoors and outside.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are no complaints to report.

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.

## **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 satisfactory. 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 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):

- increase the information available to parents regarding planned activities so that they can be involved with their child's learning

#### **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):

- ensure that all parents receive clear information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum and the areas of learning so that they can monitor their child's progress
- increase levels of challenging interaction to encourage children's engagement in activities and to help extend their learning (also applies to care).

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)