



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 134534

DfES Number: 515593

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 30/11/2004
Inspector Name Jill Milton

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Dalton Pre-School Nursery
Setting Address Block 104
Dalton Barracks
Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX13 6HG

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Dalton Pre-School Nursery

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Dalton Pre-School Nursery
Address Block 104
Dalton Barracks
Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX13 6HG

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Dalton Pre-School Nursery was established in 1993 and is managed by a committee made up of staff, parents and army personnel. The nursery operates from accommodation on the Dalton Barracks, close to the town of Abingdon. The group have the use of a unit that consists of two large playrooms, kitchen, office and toilet facilities. There is access to an enclosed outdoor play area. Most children attending have parents serving in the armed forces.

The nursery opens on weekdays during school term times, from 09.00 to 15.00. A play scheme operates in the school holidays for children up to 8 years. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 50 children on roll, of which 26 are receiving nursery education funding. Staff provide support for a number of children with special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six staff and they all have appropriate early years qualifications.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Dalton Pre-School Nursery provides high quality nursery education overall which enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn and they plan the sessions well to provide interesting activities. They take into account the six areas of learning in the planning of the curriculum and they focus on specific learning outcomes for children within each topic. Staff regularly assess the children's development and they use their knowledge of different children's needs to effectively support their progress. Care is taken to adapt activities to ensure children are included, for example by using phrases in the child's home language or providing visual clues to words if a child has difficulty in communicating. Staff manage children's behaviour well and have appropriate expectations for the age range of children, such as sitting quietly for the register or at snack time. Staff make good use of the nursery accommodation and resources to provide areas of learning. Children access a variety of equipment during the day, though they do not frequently use the book area during times of free-play.

The leadership and management of the nursery are very good. The manager provides effective day-to-day support and is actively involved in what is happening during the sessions. Staff have good opportunities to identify their own needs and attend training courses to enhance their professional development. They also explore different ways of evaluating the nursery provision with the aim of improvement.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Families can access a good range of information about the nursery and the educational activities that take place each day. Staff welcome parents on arrival and they make themselves available for informal discussions.

What is being done well?

- Staff plan the activities well and provide good support to children's learning. They work together as a team and interact effectively with the children to extend their ideas and encourage conversations. Children are busy and engaged in play.
- The strong leadership of the setting ensures staff feel well supported in their roles. The staff use of a number of methods to monitor the nursery provision, such as parental questionnaires and activity evaluation sheets.
- The children are developing good levels of independence. They pour their own drinks and place completed drawings in named trays. They make decisions about what to play and they select some resources for themselves.

- The children are progressing well with their physical skills as they use tools and materials. They notice that work with plasticine requires more force and that construction bricks sometimes need different joining skills. The children use tools like shape punchers safely and with control and they make good attempts to cut out shapes like paper poppies and balloons.
- Staff ensure that parents are kept well informed of the activities happening within the nursery and also with regard to the children's progress. Parents express their appreciation of photographic displays to show them what the children are doing and staff invite families to more formal evenings for the exchange of information.

What needs to be improved?

- the presentation of the book area to make it more inviting to children.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. Staff now include more detail in the written curriculum plans and clearly show how the activities are linked to specific learning outcomes for the children. Staff and parents can easily view the plans so they know what is happening in the nursery.

The children now have good opportunities to write their own names. Staff encourage them to name their own pictures and some children are starting to form their letters correctly. Children have daily access to writing materials and are progressing well with this aspect of their communication, language and literacy.

The children take part in activities to record what they see and know about the world around them. Staff help children to make charts of eye colour, or to record how they arrive at nursery. The children also record their own observations, for example in their colourful representations of fireworks. These activities have a positive impact on their knowledge and understanding of the world.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident and secure in the nursery routine. They are developing good levels of independence and they make their own decisions. Children concentrate very well at activities and they settle down to games with their peers. They behave well and take turns with equipment. The children show an interest in what is happening and they are eager to try what is on offer. Families from a range of cultures are welcomed into the setting and children are learning to respect differences.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children sit well at group times and take turns to talk. They have frequent conversations with their peers and the staff during the day. They use language to express their needs and ideas about what they are doing, for example as they build or paint. Children show a good awareness of the purposes of writing and many of them are very confident in their mark-making. They recognise their own names. Children enjoy shared songs and stories, though they do not often select books for themselves.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Many children are confident at counting and they recognise numerals. They count out pieces of fruit at snack time, with very little prompting from the staff. Numerals are on display around the nursery and children access toys that encourage them to use number and shape. They are starting to recognise simple addition and subtraction as they count down numbers in songs. Children explore quantity in practical ways as they play with containers in the water tray or fill buckets to the top with sand.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore how things work as they handle hole-punchers, calculators and a sand-timer. They are encouraged to observe changes as cress seeds grow or tadpoles develop. They enjoy daily access to computers and use everyday technology in their play, for example with toy mobile telephones. They learn how to join materials together and use recycled boxes in play. Children develop a good awareness of seasonal and cultural events with planned activities and outings around the army camp.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are able to progress well with their large motor skills. They adapt to using equipment that requires different techniques and many are confident in steering toys around the outdoor play area. Some children show good co-ordination and balance when they use scooters. The children are becoming aware of foods, which promote healthy eating and they realise the need for coats for play on cold days. Children use a range of tools and materials with developing confidence and control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children express their imagination and ideas as they access a good range of planned activities. During their time at the nursery, they take part in role play with their peers and staff ensure new scenarios present fresh ideas for play. The children enjoy using paint and they have the freedom sometimes to select their own colours for mixing. They experience handling many different textures such as cotton wool, fabric, sequins and glitter. Children respond using their senses as they sing and cook.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

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- the presentation of the book area to make it more inviting to children.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.