



**Office for Standards
in Education**

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 203907

DfES Number: 516704

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 02/12/2003
Inspector Name Anita Bartram

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Dovedale Nursery
Setting Address 102 Moulsham Street
 Chelmsford
 Essex
 CM2 0JQ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Willis Field

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and 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

Dovedale Nursery opened in 1991. It operates from a demountable building on the Moulsham Street campus of Chelmsford College. The nursery serves the local and wider area.

There are currently 67 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 29 funded 3 year olds and 4 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a small number of children who have special needs or who have English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Core sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00 and 13.00 until 16.00. There are additional options for children to stay for lunch or all day.

Eight part time and two full time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Four staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)

How good is the Day Care?

Dovedale Nursery provides good care for children.

The organisation of the setting is good and staff are deployed effectively to work directly with the children. Staff ensure a warm and welcoming environment through posters on display, notices and well-prepared activities. Outdoor play is readily available for children within free playtime. There is a wide and stimulating range of resources that are planned well to cover all areas of the children's learning. Most documentation is in place and up to date.

The staff provide a safe and secure environment for the children. All staff are vigilant in keeping children safe and have good procedures in place for outings. All staff have current first aid certificates. Children are able to try a variety of foods at snack

time. Staff use snack time very effectively to extend the children's counting and independence skills. All staff are appropriately aware of their child protection responsibilities.

Staff provide a caring environment where children's individual needs are fully considered. Staff follow good working practices to meet the specific needs of children with special educational needs. There is a wide range of resources to promote positive images of diversity to children. Some staff informally extend children's thinking and learning by using active questioning and listening. Children play purposefully and co-operatively. Children's behaviour is very good, they appreciate right from wrong and staff have a good understanding of the reasons behind children's unwanted behaviour.

Staff are readily available to speak with parents at either ends of the day. Parents are welcomed into the group at any time and are encouraged to spend time in the nursery to help settle their child.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable

What is being done well?

- There is a good range of activities and resources on offer. This includes valuable core activities such as sand and water and also a full size computer which children operate appropriately for their age. The range covers all six early learning goals.
- Staff have very effective procedures in place to keep children safe. For example, they conducted a safety audit using the accident records and identified a pattern of times when children were more likely to hurt themselves. Staff have since been re-deployed and this has helped to minimise accidents occurring.
- Children's behaviour is good. They show very little unwanted behaviour, they are settled and play co-operatively. Staff discuss positive strategies to manage children's behaviour and have measures in place to anticipate and thus minimise disruptive behaviour.
- The organisation and use of snack time is very good. Children are chosen randomly to be helpers and then help staff to set out tables. During this time staff count out plates, cups and chairs with children. They refer to written numbers to reinforce children's awareness of numbers. During snack time all children are able to choose and pour their own drinks. The helpers hand out food and children count crisps etc onto their plate. A member of staff sits at each table which provides a good role model for their behaviour and extends their conversational skills.

What needs to be improved?

- the staffs' understanding of the foundation stage and how they can be more instrumental in helping children learn through play etc.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
3	Increase the awareness and understanding of all staff as to how they can be more instrumental and pro-active in helping children learn and progress through play and everyday activities.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Provision for nursery education at Dovedale Nursery is good. It enables children to make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make generally good progress towards the three other early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Outdoor play is planned and children play outside freely. This accommodates children's differing learning styles and they can learn in a more open environment. Children have very good access to the computer. Staff use appropriate software and frequently sit alongside children to support their learning. Staff effectively support children with special educational needs (SEN) or English as an additional language. They have a good working knowledge of meeting children's specific needs and the formal code of practice for SEN.

Staff carry out worthwhile initial observations to give a clear picture of children's starting points. Assessment records are being reviewed, as currently staff cannot identify gaps in children's learning. Good long-term plans cover all early learning goals. However, short-term plans do not identify support or challenge for children's differing abilities or ages. Some staff can extend more able children's learning informally. However, some are less instrumental and opportunities are missed during play or whilst setting up snack tables. This is particularly relevant to children's calculation skills.

Leadership and management is generally good. There is effective support for staff who are actively rewarded for training. Senior staff are aware of the group's strengths and weaknesses although the system of assessment and planning is not yet thorough enough.

Partnership with parents is very good. There is very effective communication between staff and parents on both a verbal and written basis. Parents can meet termly with a key worker to discuss their child's progress.

What is being done well?

- The provision for outdoor play is very good. Children are able to readily and spontaneously access outdoor equipment and activities. Staff are aware that some children need to be outside more than others and accommodate these children's learning styles by taking the curriculum out to them. Whilst outside, children learn to care for living things and develop their physical skills. They become more aware of the world around them and the community in which they live.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. They are confident and have positive attitudes to learning. Children are beginning

to make special friendships between each other and work co-operatively alongside each other during role play or whilst building with large construction equipment. They relate well to adults and demonstrate a sense of trust. Children have good levels of independence.

- Children are beginning to communicate well. They use language for a variety of purposes and are particularly good in conversation. Children can verbally put into sequence events based upon first hand experiences and recount stories that have happened at home. They can listen to each other and offer meaningful comments relevant to the topic of conversation.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to calculate during practical play experiences and everyday contexts
- the use and format of children's assessment records to inform the short term planning so that staff can identify gaps in children's learning and plan for the differing abilities of children.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made in implementing the action plan drawn up to address the two key issues identified at the previous inspection, resulting in good improvements being made to the educational programme. Children are now much more aware of letter shapes and the sounds letters make. Many older children know the correct sounds of familiar letters and can form recognisable letters to write their name. Many younger children are prepared to try. Staff now exploit opportunities for children to recognise number during daily routines such as snack-time and the children's skills in counting are developing well. Most children are keen to count.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children's behaviour is very good. They appreciate the boundaries set by staff and are aware of right and wrong. Children stand up for their own rights and usually manage to resolve issues verbally. They enjoy caring for guinea pigs and care for themselves appropriately. For example, most children go to the toilet, wipe their nose or pour themselves a drink independently. Children feel safe and secure which is shown through their good relationships with each other and with familiar adults.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are using language very effectively. They can tell you what they are thinking and offer detailed explanations events. Children enjoy books very much. They are aware that books are fun and many have favourite stories. They choose books to read during their play and most children listen attentively at story time. Children are beginning to recognise familiar letters and some of their sounds. Many older children can write their names and younger children are willing to try.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Most children enjoy counting and many older children can count purposefully beyond ten. Children are aware of numerals and most can recognise familiar numbers such as three and four. Some older children are more aware of other numerals up to ten and use this knowledge well to work independently. Children can confidently count and order by size. However, children are not always aware of shapes within their environment. Opportunities for developing calculation skills are not always provided.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Most children enjoy construction. They do this co-operatively as part of a large group or alone. They build purposefully and discuss what they are making. They build in stories such as going on a fire engine or build towers to measure and compare themselves against. Children are very skilled at using the computer. They knowledgeably use the mouse to follow instructions or answer questions. Many older children can independently select new programmes to play and complete them efficiently.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have a good sense of space. They move freely around indoors and negotiate their way outside to play. Children competently pedal and steer bikes etc and weave in and out of space. Most children find a space to sit at story time or form a circle at home time. Children handle tools effectively to make changes to materials such as playdough and wet sand. However, children have infrequent opportunities to practice larger physical skills of climbing due to insufficient planning in this area.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children keenly participate with simple songs. They are building up a repertoire of songs and request favourites. Many children willingly engage in role-play, either in the home corner or whilst building with large bricks. They use available resources appropriately such as in the shop and can introduce simple story lines into their imaginary play. However, although musical instruments are within the children's reach, they do not readily use instruments to explore sounds of beats and rhythms.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally 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: THE KEY ISSUES

- ensure gaps in children's learning that are identified in assessment records are considered in short-term plans, so that younger children's learning can be supported and reinforced and older children's learning can be challenged and extended
- provide more opportunities for children to practice calculating during both planned and spontaneous activities.

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.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.