

Dulverton Childrens Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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18/05/2011

Inspector

Sue Hall

Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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.

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Description of the setting

Dulverton Children's Centre opened in 2005 and was re-registered by Somerset County Council in 2008. The nursery is part of the children's centre which also provides family support and health services. It operates from a new building attached to All Saints First School in Dulverton and children attend from the town and the surrounding villages. Children have access to the main open plan room, which is divided into two areas. The main play area has toilets, a kitchen, a sleep room and office facilities. There is also a family room that is available for a range of activities. Most rooms lead out into an enclosed garden which has both grass and hard standing areas. The building has been designed to ensure the full integration of children with additional needs.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It may care for no more than 48 children under eight years; of these, not more than 48 may be in the early years age group. There are currently 39 children in the early years age range on roll, some attend before and/or after attending the local authority nursery. The nursery is open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm for 50 weeks of the year.

There are eight members of staff, of whom seven hold at least a level 3 early years qualification and three are working towards a higher qualification. The group is supported by an early years teacher and five supply staff. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The quality of provision is good and meets the needs of the children well. They are welcomed into a safe and caring environment where there are some good activities to engage their interest from an early age. Parents and carers say how keen their children are to attend and think they make considerable gains in their skills and levels of confidence. There are very well-established and detailed self-evaluation procedures which ensure there is a clear understanding of the quality of provision. The management team organise the staff team well and the nursery demonstrates a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve the resources to support role play and imaginative activities and ensure mark-making opportunities are central to the provision
- provide more regular and timely information to parents and carers of forthcoming activities and events.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety is protected well because staff have high levels of awareness and understanding of safeguarding and child protection requirements. They successfully implement comprehensive policies and procedures to ensure that children are kept safe. Risk assessments are carried out regularly to minimise possible incidents. Information is recorded carefully and staff use this to identify if there are any trends regarding specific play areas, activities or equipment. Security procedures are very well established and ensure that everyone follows robust procedures on arrival and departure. Staff are deployed very effectively which ensures that children are supervised well, including at sleep times. Children from a few months of age are looked after by familiar adults which helps them settle well to routines. Procedures to recruit and vet new staff ensure their suitability to work with the children. There is a very wide range of high-quality resources and equipment that is safe and matched to the age of the children. They are well cared for in a very safe, well maintained, attractive and often stimulating environment.

Partnerships with parents and carers are good. All of those spoken to in the inspection noted how much their children enjoy attending the nursery. They think their children benefit from the range of activities and develop the confidence to communicate with others alongside learning more about the world around them. The established use of a home-link book supports the passing on of day-to-day information and notice-boards provide a wide range of useful literature. However, parents are not always provided with updated information, such as forthcoming activities. Partnerships with the host school and external services are outstanding. Well-established links with the adjoining local authority nursery and the shared use of the very well equipped outdoor area ensures that transition into the next phase of education is smooth and effective. Through the teacher's dual role as a local authority advisory teacher for special educational needs and/or disabilities, links with external agencies are excellent. Staff actively promote equality and diversity and ensure all children are fully included in activities.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. Senior staff work successfully to ensure that recent staffing changes have been managed effectively and that new staff are well briefed. Staff regularly attend training opportunities to enhance their qualifications and expertise. There are excellent self-evaluation systems in place which fully involve parents and carers. For example, this month everyone is looking at the complaints procedure. Such effective and in-depth reviews ensure that policies and procedures are kept up to date and accurately reflect what happens in this nursery. This supports an excellent focus on and drive towards further improvement. Good progress has been made in addressing the areas for improvement noted in the previous inspection. Parents and carers are now fully involved in contributing to the early assessments of what their child can do which ensures starting points are accurately identified. There has been improvement to systems to identify and record any existing injuries to further safeguard children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children benefit from spacious purpose-built accommodation which ensures that indoor and outdoor activities are often stimulating and fun. This meets the learning needs and interests of the different age groups effectively and enables them to achieve well. Staff are responsive to the interests and ideas of the children. This is reflected in the equipment chosen for those of a few months of age.

Children behave well because there is a very calm working environment and staff are good role models with high expectations of the children. Praise is used effectively to build their self-esteem and children play together well. Most share equipment outdoors and understand they need to take turns when using the sit-in cars and trikes. They happily share the use of large chalks for drawing and use rollers and cutters for malleable materials. Relationships between adults and children are strong with some well-judged hugs and care for the youngest children when they are tired and upset. Staff actively encourage children to become independent and make choices in what they are to do next. Children are encouraged to get out and put away equipment and take on small jobs, such as giving out items to a group which helps them to make a positive contribution to their community. Resources are generally good but the home corner/role play area is not very stimulating. With no specific theme and only limited dressing-up clothes and equipment on display, this does little to stimulate imaginative play and discussion. The mark making area is similarly uninspiring and not central to activities. This does little to help develop an early interest in mark-making and writing, such as making menus or taking orders in a café, shop or local service organisation.

Children develop a good understanding of keeping themselves safe and healthy. They learn to make healthy choices at snack time and enjoy well-balanced and nutritious lunches on site. They enjoy sociable mealtimes together and are encouraged to try foods that are new to them. They learn to use equipment safely and run, jump and move about freely, particularly in the well-resourced and stimulating outdoor area. Staff show their responsiveness to the youngest children's interests by making a small but secure area for them to use outside which protects them from older children. They have opportunities to grow things, including potatoes and courgettes, in the raised beds and to pot their own seeds in individual containers. They know that when using the sand and water trays they have to be aware of others.

Children are keen to attend the nursery and make good progress in all areas of their learning and development. There is a good focus on developing communication skills through staff modelling sounds and words to younger children and the good use of questions to encourage them to reply. The older children enjoy playing computer games where they sort different pictures to make the persons clothes match up together. Displays show examples of their paintings and there is a good focus on children producing their own pictures. The Heuristic play area helps develop independent exploration but is a work in progress to make this more stimulating. Younger children develop their understanding of shapes and

numbers when using small wooden blocks to see how many they can balance into a tower. Staff provide opportunities through visits and visitors for the children to learn more about life beyond their local area. A pictorial display shows a recent focus on other cultures and celebrations. Planning shows a good balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities. Overall, children are well prepared for their future.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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