

# Inspection of Dorchester Community Nursery School

York Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1QA

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Inspection date: 25 November 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Good

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Children enter the setting eagerly and are very much valued and welcomed by the caring, friendly staff. Children behave extremely well and staff have high expectations of them. Staff skilfully help children to play together happily. They provide a broad curriculum that supports children to make good progress. They enable children to follow their interests and develop positive attitudes to learning through their play. For example, children listen attentively to a story about a penguin. They talk with staff about countries where penguins live and the weather is cold. Children like to sort and match objects. They concentrate well and start to develop sequencing skills, for example, when alternating green and blue toy penguins in a line to make a colourful pattern. Children show great interest in farms. They had fun playing in the outdoor farmyard role play area, where they helped to rake up the hay and explored heads of wheat and barley. Staff have changed the arrival and collection arrangements to keep children safe as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. They greet children at the main entrance and are proactive in their partnership with parents to keep them well-informed about their children's activities and learning.

## **What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?**

- Staff act as excellent role models and give clear emphasis to helping children understand their emotions and those of others. They implement consistently positive behaviour management strategies extremely well. Staff use praise and encouragement exceptionally well to help children develop high levels of self-esteem. Children show great kindness and consideration to others. They wait patiently for their friends to take a turn in a group activity.
- The management team and staff work together effectively as a team and continually reflect on their practice to develop their skills. For example, staff have raised their understanding of appropriate strategies to support children's mental health and well-being.
- Staff promote children's communication and language very well through play. For example, they use role play activities to help children learn about positional language. Children listen well to staff and put toy cups under a shelf or fit the lid on top of a play kettle. Staff encourage discussions well and use questions effectively to extend children's understanding. However, at times, staff do not give children as much time as possible to respond to questions and build even further on their existing vocabulary.
- Children are motivated to learn through the variety of purposeful play activities. For example, they become absorbed using different-coloured paints to create a rainbow picture. Staff extend this activity to support children's understanding of the world and encourage discussion about the weather. Children confidently tell staff, 'when the sunshine is out and it is raining, there will be a rainbow'.

- Staff promote children's good health effectively. Children benefit from often playing in the fresh air and they have fun being energetic outdoors. They help a friend learn to control and manoeuvre a favourite ride-on toy around the playground. Children enjoy nutritious snacks, such as pitta bread, blueberries, bananas and vegan sausages. Staff liaise well with parents to ensure they meet all children's specific dietary needs.
- Children develop their imaginations well. They pretend to be customers in the mud kitchen café and 'eat' a cheeseburger or a pasta dish made of leaves and twigs. Children enjoy buying and selling real fruit and vegetables, such as carrots and broccoli, in the farmer's market role play area.
- Parents speak highly of staff. They say that they are knowledgeable, caring and professional and are always very supportive of their children and family. Parents comment that staff create a secure, safe and nurturing environment for children to develop and thrive.
- Staff encourage children's developing confidence in counting. Children start to recognise the number of dots on a dice. However, staff have not fully considered ways to help children develop their understanding of linking written numerals to quantity, to develop their number recognition skills even further.
- Staff carefully consider the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They promote inclusion effectively. For example, staff continually review and adapt activities and play areas to enable all children to gain the confidence to participate and learn through their play.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The management team and staff have an appropriate understanding of signs that may cause them concern about children's welfare. They know the procedures to follow should any concerns arise, and they continue to update their knowledge of safeguarding issues. There are clear recruitment procedures in place. The management team continues to assess the suitability of staff and provides regular opportunities for supervision sessions and meetings to help develop staff skills and knowledge. Staff complete risk assessments of the play areas to help minimise accidents and keep children safe.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

**To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:**

- allow children time to process their thoughts and respond and express their ideas
- make more use of opportunities for children to understand about linking numerals to quantity to develop their mathematical awareness even further.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139333
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10062626
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	32
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	45
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Dorchester Community Nursery School Association Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP519757
<b>Telephone number</b>	01305 265140
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 November 2015

## Information about this early years setting

Dorchester Community Nursery School registered in 1993. It operates from a purpose-built building situated in Dorchester, Dorset. The pre-school is run by a management committee and opens term time only. Sessions run Monday to Friday, from 9am until 3.30pm, with an early start option from 8.30am. A team of 12 staff work with the children. The manager and the deputy manager have foundation degrees in early years care and education, and five staff hold early years qualifications at level 3. An administrative assistant works in the office. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Mary Daniel

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the deputy manager took the inspector on a tour of the setting and explained how the curriculum is delivered.
- The inspector and the deputy manager completed a joint observation of an activity and discussed the quality of teaching.
- A sample of documents were viewed, including staff qualifications and first-aid certificates.
- The inspector observed children's interactions in play indoors and outdoors, and discussed their learning and development with staff.
- The inspector took into account the spoken and written views of parents.
- A meeting was held between the inspector and the management team.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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