



Dodleston Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305044
Inspection date	07 July 2006
Inspector	Ron Goldsmith
Setting Address	Dodleston Village Hall, Dodleston, Chester, Cheshire, CH4 9NT
Telephone number	0777 6134418
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Registered person	Dodleston Preschool
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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.

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?

Dodleston Preschool opened in 1981. It is managed by a committee and operates from the main room in the village hall, situated in the Dodleston area of Chester. The preschool serves the local area. There are currently 19 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, nine children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The setting supports children with learning difficulties. It operates four days a week

during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 11.45 on Monday, Tuesday and Friday and from 13.00 until 15.00 on Wednesday. On Tuesdays a lunch club is offered until 12.45.

Four staff work with the children. Three of the staff have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from an early years teacher and other advisory staff from the local authority, and are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy daily physical play sessions outdoors, developing their strength and coordination. Children are happy playing outdoors as they run, slide and climb; or they are inquisitive as they explore texture in the sand tray. They enjoy the fresh air, the good weather and exercising their bodies. When they come in staff ask if they can feel how much cooler it is, encouraging children to be aware of temperature changes. The children are happy to be out of the sun and cooling down after vigorous play. Staff plan a range of activities to help children develop their manipulative skills so that children handle equipment and tools well. They enjoy a range of planned activities which enables them to develop their skills and capabilities.

Effective cleaning systems to prevent the risk of cross infection are implemented as table surfaces are wiped down using anti bacterial spray. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through daily routines, for example, washing their hands after visiting the toilet or before snack. Older children attend to their own personal needs competently. Although drinks are provided at set times water is not freely available for children at all times and therefore they are not drinking enough to maintain their health by hydrating, particularly in hot weather.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a secure and welcoming environment. There are some brightly coloured displays and easily accessible equipment for self-selection. This encourages children to feel confident and secure at the provision and is reflected in their eagerness to attend. When their older brothers and sisters are taken out on a walk with the local school they eagerly look out of the window to see them go.

Effective safety measures are in place such as, socket covers, fire fighting equipment and restricted access to the building. Children develop a good awareness of safety as they are reminded not to run about the premises. The provider has completed a formal risk assessment of the premises to ensure hazards are removed. Children freely explore the warm, stimulating environment. Children have access to a range of resources that stimulate their interest and expand their learning. Toys and equipment are enjoyable, safe, and in good condition.

Different play areas and resources are clearly identified within the room with; for example, a cosy area for sharing books, easels for painting and a role play area with dressing-up clothes and house play. Children move about freely between play areas when they can choose their own games. Children are confident to select resources which staff have put out for them, which successfully fosters their growing independence. Staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and the action they would take in order to protect children. Staff are aware to report concerns to the appropriate agency, should they have any concerns regarding children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are eager to attend the setting. Staff create a positive environment where most activities are child-led. Children happily make their own choices in free play sessions as they move around the different areas. Staff offer some support and guidance when children lack the confidence to move on or cannot decide what to do next. However, opportunities for younger children are restricted because staff have limited knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters framework.

Children learn to think and question what is happening as they explore their environment using all their senses. They do this during sand and dough play, anticipating snack when they smell nan bread being prepared, using art and craft resources, and running around freely outdoors. They are encouraged to use their imagination and develop communication skills through a wide range of first hand experiences, such as role play, making constructions, creating small worlds with figures, sharing books and listening to music.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and plan a range of interesting activities across the six areas of learning. However, planning is not sufficiently linked to all aspects of learning. Staff complete relevant observations on children's play and learning to record individual progress, but this does not inform future planning sufficiently well. Not all the assessment records are available to examine. Consequently, the observation, assessment and planning cycle is not effectively linked to identify and prioritise what each child knows and can do to plan the next steps for individual children.

Staff provide children with a range of interesting activities that engage their interest. Staff communicate well with the children, they ask some questions that enable children to think and to solve problems. For example, a project in which children build a picture with corn. They talk about how corn looks when it is growing, what happens when it is cooked or heated. They create 'twirly' paintings and children are patient as they wait for their turn, talking about how the painting is created.

Children's behaviour is good, they play well together and show care and concern for each other. Children sing simple nursery rhymes spontaneously, sometimes

prompted by songs and music that play in the background, but there are few opportunities to explore the different sounds of instruments, or to move rhythmically to music. Children are imaginative in their play and enjoy extensive role play in activities, such as dressing up as a crocodile, and making accompanying noises. In the home corner they prepare food and operate the telephone. They talk about people and events that are important to them. A recent project allowed children to write letters and then go to the local post box to send them. These activities all contribute to children's understanding and thought about the world around them, how things work, and a sense of time and place.

Children enjoy some physical activities outdoors. They enjoy using the slide and climbing frame, as they run, slide and climb. They are beginning to count to 10 and beyond and recognise different shapes. They use some positional language such as front, behind, under or over but there are few opportunities for them to begin to understand calculation, such as simple addition and subtraction. Children register themselves confidently on arrival as they find their name in the basket and place it on the board. Staff and older children support those who need help in finding their name. Children recognise their written names and sometimes the names of others. They enjoy sharing books with each other and generally handle them correctly, turning the pages and laughing at some of the images and stories. However, there are few opportunities to link sounds with letters or to write for different purposes. Through these activities children develop a range of mathematical knowledge, in addition to developing enquiring minds, helping them to understand their world

The children construct with a range of building materials and make models using their fine movements, and developing their hand and eye coordination. The children use a range of small tools with increasing control and confidence, for example, glue spreaders, pencils and crayons and shape cutters. They have opportunities to explore their environment, and are supported by the staff working alongside them during play. They are able to select from a range of art and craft activities. This enables the children to be independent and to use their vivid imagination and natural creativity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to make decisions and think for themselves because they are given opportunities to make their own choices in selecting the resources and activities that they do. They become increasingly independent while still being given assistance when needed. Children learn to behave well and have consideration for others. For example, they cooperate well when playing together, handing each other equipment and taking turns without any need for prompting. This is because the staff establish helpful attitudes in children.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff treat each child as an individual, acknowledging and respecting their home experiences and developing their self-esteem as they are given a warm welcome each day. Children develop awareness of peoples similarities and differences and learn to

appreciate diversity in cultures and beliefs through some good books and topics, such as when they celebrate Chinese New Year. Staff work well with parents and other agencies to follow up concerns about speech and language development.

Partnership with parents is good. Relationships with parents are very positive which establishes a good basis for the open exchange of information and views. Parents understand procedures for children's safety and welfare as they receive good information about the provision from the parent-pack, the notices displayed and daily informal contact. Parents are able to discuss children's progress as they bring and collect their children. They are welcomed into the room where they can see what the children have been doing. They are aware of the topics children have covered and about the early learning goals because staff organise meetings to give them information or send home regular newsletters. Records of children's progress are shared.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The playgroup share the premises with other groups. As a result all equipment and resources have to be put out and cleared away each day. This absorbs staff time and energy and impacts on the amount of time that staff could spend in other ways. Staff understand child protection issues and have suitable procedures for recording and reporting concerns, which they share with parents in their policy pack. There have been significant changes in the management team over the past months and some systems have been reviewed and updated to meet regulations and revisions to the National Standards. However, not all policies and systems are up to date and these include the uncollected child policy and unvetted staff policy. Ofsted has not been notified of changes to committee members and therefore the suitability of committee members has not been verified. This is a breach of regulations.

The manager provides leadership which enables the staff to work together as a team. Space and resources are well-managed to provide a welcoming environment. Staff are supported by a range of opportunities to attend training to update their knowledge and skills. However, systems for monitoring the quality of the provision are not fully developed and although staff training is provided, it is not linked to appraisals and professional development in order to meet identified needs and support improvements within the setting. The special needs coordinator (SENCO) has not yet had the necessary training, although a course has been identified for her. There is some monitoring of the educational programme but without clearer records of children's progress it is hard for the setting to identify areas for future improvement.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Children engage in sufficient activities to maintain their interest and this is enhanced by the staff's knowledge of child development and children's differing needs. Children benefit from good staff ratios, giving them plenty of individual attention. However, management have not established clear procedures to effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, and to assess the impact on young children. As a result there are some gaps in the educational provision. Overall, the provision meets the

needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There has been little progress in identifying the key issues raised at previous inspections. The committee has not been involved in the evaluation and monitoring process and therefore has made little contribution to making improvements that might benefit the children. A new committee has recently been appointed. In providing care the setting has ensured confidentiality in the accident record and ensured that parents sign to acknowledge information has been given to them about accidents. The setting also agreed to ensure committee members completed the appropriate vetting procedure and to update procedures to include an uncollected child policy. These matters have not been resolved.

In nursery education the setting agreed to record children's progress in the early learning goals, share children's progress with parents, and ensure all aspects of the early learning goals were included in planning. Areas requiring strengthening included; linking sounds to letters; making children aware of technology; using music to explore rhythm and physical activities to develop children's awareness of space and control. The setting has developed a mechanism to record children's progress in the early learning goals by using assessment profiles, but were unable to produce assessments for all the children cared for. They have developed opportunities to share information about individual children with parents through discussion and reports which inform parents of their children's progress. Whilst planning has been developed not all aspects of the early learning goals are delivered and in particular the linking of sounds to letters and use of music, were again identified as areas requiring further development.

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.

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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):

- ensure fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- consider how more opportunities can be made to support learning for younger children in the setting by implementing aspects of the Birth to three framework
- ensure that systems for notifying Ofsted of changes to committee members is amended so that it contains details which enable the suitability of committee members to be verified
- ensure all policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting are consistent with current legislation and guidance including the unvetted staff policy, the uncollected child policy and by ensuring more frequent fire drills are carried out

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):

- develop effective management systems for the organisation to evaluate and monitor the quality of care and education
- ensure that all areas of learning are covered sufficiently.

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