



D-Dee's Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127141
Inspection date	07 December 2006
Inspector	Virginia Cooper
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Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good. 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?

D-Dees Day Nursery opened in 1996. It operates from a building with five rooms, an office, cloakroom, kitchen and staff room in Boughton-under-Blean, between Faversham and Canterbury. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding towns.

A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 66 children from babies to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for early education. The nursery is able to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The nursery employs ten members of staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a warm, caring environment helping them feel emotionally secure. A settling in procedure is in place ensuring children feel confident and secure about leaving their main carers. They enjoy a close relationship with staff and are confident and able to express how they are feeling, for example, they put their arms up for a cuddle knowing staff will respond. Babies' nappies are changed regularly to keep them comfortable. Staff are aware of good hygiene practice and the importance of sound personal care to reduce cross infection; for example, they use gloves and sanitize the changing mat after each nappy change.

Children are cared for in an environment where toys, furniture and equipment are clean. Staff are attentive and notice quickly if children are off colour; children who become poorly whilst attending the group are comforted and made comfortable until their parents are able to collect them. A sick child policy understood by staff, the use of liquid soap, hot air hand dryers and good cleaning procedures, helps to prevent the spread of infection. For example, staff use anti bacterial spray throughout the session to keep surfaces hygienically clean. Children learn about good hygiene practice through the daily routine. They wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and touching the pet rabbit. Good procedures are in place about the administration of medication to ensure parents are well informed and children are not given anything that is unsuitable.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to play outside, helping them to acquire a healthy attitude to physical exercise and develop their gross motor skills, for example, running, jumping, hopping, riding bikes and using climbing frames.

Parents provide formula milk for babies' bottles; it is their choice whether they want to bring them in already made up, or staff will make them as required. They are stored appropriately. Staff work in co-operation with parents over babies weaning and can purée vegetables, fruit and nursery meals to provide appropriate food. Older children all eat meals that are freshly prepared on the premises by a cook who is well informed about any food allergies, or preferences children have, ensuring they are given an appropriate diet agreed with parents. Because the cook takes sole responsibility for the children's meals, staff have more time with the children and are not called away to prepare food. The meals are nutritionally balanced with lots of fresh, seasonal vegetables. Food is presented attractively, looks appetising and the different colours and flavours of the food appeal to the children. The portions are a good size ensuring children are well nourished. This encourages them to eat well and try new foods. Staff are good role models to children at meal times; they sit with them and often eat the same meals; children learn good table manners. Children and staff chat at meal times, and this encourages children's social skills. They discuss which foods are good for them encouraging them to start making healthy lifestyle choices. Children drink regularly to ensure they remain hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The security at the nursery is very good. An intercom and video system ensures staff can monitor who is coming into the nursery. The owner has given considerable thought about the furnishings and purchases quality goods to make the nursery as homely as possible. There are large sofas that children rest and relax upon. The babies cruise around the furniture whilst they learn to walk just as they would at home. Staff in the baby room play nursery music and sometimes tune into the local radio station to complete the homely atmosphere. Nursery size furniture enables children to undertake tasks more easily. There is a good range of resources that are well maintained, clean and safe.

The owner is very safety conscious and carries out a thorough risk assessment of the premises and outdoor play areas. Staff undertake daily visual checks to ensure all safety equipment is in place, for example, socket covers and gates that have been especially made ensuring they fit properly. Heating throughout the nursery is wall mounted, protecting children. All new mattresses have recently been purchased for the cots because a staff member noticed the old ones had shrunk and a gap had appeared. The owner acted quickly to rectify this situation to ensure sleeping babies are safe. The owner has invested in safety surface for the outdoor area to enable children to play outside at all times of the year. Non slip flooring is fitted in areas that may get wet to prevent children slipping. Electrical appliances are checked regularly and parents are able to see the certificates.

All staff are familiar with the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. They are clear about the child protection procedures to follow if they have concerns about any child to ensure the welfare of children. The owner takes overall responsibility for child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The same staff work with the babies and toddlers each day helping them feel secure. They are kind and nurture them appropriately developing their self-esteem. They love to snuggle up to staff and listen to stories.

Staff are aware of the Birth to three matters framework but are experiencing difficulties making changes to the way they deliver activities to the youngest children. They have made some progress collecting natural resources together to make a treasure basket; however, babies mostly play with manufactured plastic toys that are not particularly tactile or of much interest to them. Staff are not always using their informal observations to respond effectively and provide activities that children are indicating they have an interest in. On the first day of the inspection babies and toddlers are mostly reliant upon staff to get equipment out for them; the resources are not easily accessible. On the second day of the inspection, staff experiment with allowing babies and toddlers to access more resources independently. Children are enjoying this freedom and are more involved in their play; this encourages staff to experiment more with the ways resources are presented to children. Children enjoy plenty of outdoor play and explore sand and water regularly. The nursery has a pet rabbit helping children learn how to take care of animals.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All the staff working with funded children have some understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. They plan some interesting activities to cover all six learning areas, which are presented with enthusiasm. The children enjoy participating and staff use the time when children are making things to chat with them. They show genuine interest in what children say, making them keen to communicate and proving that what they say is of value. Staff experience of keeping and recording children's progress towards the early learning goals, however, is variable. Staff do not always record what children already know or have learnt. Much of the information they know about the children is committed to memory and therefore appropriate challenges and the areas to explore next are not always identified in a formal or consistent way. Staff plan one main activity each day, this is often an art and craft activity. These activities are very adult led, staff pre-cut and provide everything needed, dispensing with the need for children to explore and discover for themselves the most appropriate tools and materials to use. This is not encouraging them to become independent learners and thinkers. The rest of the day is mostly free play. These peripheral activities are not usually provided with any desirable learning outcome in mind or to support the current topic to help children compound their learning. Much of what they learn at these times is not recorded. Staff have an inclination to undertake tasks for children they can easily manage alone or with a little assistance, for example, they write children's names on their work, even for children who can competently manage alone.

Children behave well and become engrossed in their play when they select resources for themselves and work independently. They sit and concentrate whilst the dental hygienist explains to them the importance of caring for their teeth. Staff use some lovely equipment to help children explore their emotions, for example, they have special dolls that have eyes that follow you encouraging children to share what they are feeling. Children take turns whilst playing games and share easily.

Children chat with staff easily and are keen to share their news with them. Staff encourage them to think and solve problems by asking them open ended questions. Some children know the sounds different letters make. They understand that print carries meaning and staff improve the children's vocabulary through regular story telling and helping children find new words to describe activities they undertake. They have regular opportunities to recognise their names and to write. Some children can relay a story very accurately remembering every detail in the right sequence. A love of books is encouraged and children know books can be to discover information as well as to read for pleasure.

Most children can count up to ten competently and staff have devised lots of number games to help them practise these skills. Staff use positional language regularly and naturally refer to shape, size and colours as children play. Children help to set the tables at lunch time and staff take this opportunity to help them make simple calculations and count how many cups they need.

Children undertake junk modelling enabling them to design and make a self chosen project. They gain feedback from this activity about what works well and what doesn't, expanding their knowledge of how to build something successfully. They have an interest table and are presently

learning about winter. They use computerised games and a personal computer will be available to them soon. They celebrate a variety of different festivals throughout the year encouraging children to develop an understanding of different cultures and beliefs.

The outdoor play area has a safety surface that enables children to enjoy play in the fresh air regularly. They move safely with confidence, control and co-ordination. They are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles; staff explain the importance of eating food that is good for them and discuss the benefits of exercise. Children use hand held tools with increasing control, however, staff do not always exercise patience and allow children to rectify situations for themselves, for example staff scrape away excess glue rather than allowing the child to do this.

Children's creativity is encouraged in some ways and hampered in others. They enjoy regular visits from a peripatetic music teacher who teaches them songs that they sing from memory. This provides them with opportunities to play different instruments and explore tone, rhythm and pitch. There are some interesting role play resources but children have not been able to access these all the time. The toys and equipment are not easily accessible enabling children to make independent choices; however, staff are beginning to experiment with more equipment being where children can reach it. Most of the wall displays crafted by the children are uniform and do not express children's individual artistic talents. The adult input is very evident.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children co-operate well and show care and concern for each other. A member of staff takes responsibility for promoting equal opportunities within the nursery. She ensures that all children feel able to take part in all the activities. Resources and all the displays throughout the nursery reflect diversity positively. Children celebrate other festivals and their knowledge of other cultures is being extended.

Staff are able to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities and have a very willing attitude. There is evidence of the good work they have undertaken with children in the past and the appreciation shown by their parents.

Children's behaviour is very good, there is a family atmosphere and children respond well to the praise and encouragement they get when they behave well, making them more inclined to repeat this behaviour. Staff take into account children's individual circumstances and treat them accordingly, for example if parents tell them they have not slept well they sit with a member of staff and have a story allowing them to relax. The children are happy, settled and enjoy their time at nursery. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff use a contact book for the babies each day informing parents about their child's day, nappy changes, sleeps and what they have eaten. Once they leave the baby unit a contact book is only written if parents particularly want this. Most information for the older children is exchanged verbally. Parents clearly feel comfortable in the nursery and chat to staff for some time when they collect their child. Parents confirm they are pleased with service provided. The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are provided with comprehensive information about the setting, and receive regular newsletters. They relate well to the staff, however,

because the quality of the assessment records is variable, it is difficult for parents to establish easily how well their child is progressing toward the early learning goals. The opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's assessment records and share the progress they are making at home are limited.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The group display their registration document resulting in parents knowing the conditions of their registration. The provider ensures that staff are suitable to work with children through a robust recruitment and vetting procedure. All staff have been vetted and hold Criminal Record Bureau checks. The owner manages the nursery and is on the premises most of the time enabling her to monitor and supervise staff; a formal appraisal system is planned, but not yet in place. The group's organisational plan is readily available to all parents; the owner takes responsibility for many of the key roles in the nursery. The plan includes information about the Foundation Stage but nothing about the Birth to three matters framework. Staff caring for babies are not confident about using this document and the manager is trying to arrange for someone to help and advise them. All mandatory records are in place, well maintained and kept confidentially. A member of staff who holds a current paediatric first aid course is always on the premises in case of emergencies. A programme is in place to enable staff to update their first aid qualifications as they expire.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The owner has a clear vision of what she wants for the nursery and believes strongly that children who are happy will thrive and learn more easily. The owner, who also takes day to day responsibility for managing the nursery, is able to identify the setting's strengths and weaknesses. She is committed to improving the care and education for all children and to this end has introduced different strategies over time to the way assessment is recorded, how staff plan and how parents are informed of their child's progress toward the early learning goals. Unfortunately, the commitment to these new schemes is frequently short lived and this results in inconsistency and a difficulty to evaluate effectively what is working well and what requires development. The policies and procedures in place ensure a safe and suitable environment. The toilets used by the pre-school children do not have doors and therefore children's privacy is compromised although staff are sensitive to any children who are uncomfortable about this. Staff are encouraged to undertake appropriate training. Staff meetings are informal but all staff are able to offer suggestions about the effective running of the provision. There are sufficient resources to provide children with a suitable range of age appropriate activities and the nursery is well furnished. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection three recommendations were made that relate to Standard 3, Standard 6 and Standard 14.

It was recommended that risk assessments and fire drills are recorded in writing and to update the policies and procedures. The owner has addressed all these recommendations and the records are available for parents to see. The owner was also asked to expand the opportunities

for the under two year olds to have choices in their play with a range of equipment to help their all round development. The owner explained that at the last inspection staff would get out one box of toys for the babies and toddlers to play with, she said that they now get out two, providing children with more choice. The resources are still not easily accessible in the baby room and babies are still dependant upon staff to get out resources for them. Staff are experiencing difficulty using the Birth to three matters document and therefore a similar recommendation remains.

At the last education inspection they were asked to find ways to ensure that parents are informed about their children's progress in all the six areas of learning. Parents are able to access their child's assessment records at any time and information is included in the prospectus about the Foundation Stage. However, most information is still exchanged verbally and whilst the assessment records are available they do not always reflect accurately the progress children are making toward the early learning goals. Therefore, a recommendation about assessment record keeping is included.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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):

- observe babies and toddlers carefully to establish which skills they are particularly interested in developing, and provide appropriate activities to enable them to perfect these new skills through their play
- encourage children's independence by ensuring all children can easily access toys and equipment of their own choice
- consider how children's privacy and dignity is preserved whilst using the toilets in the main nursery.

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):

- record more of what children know and learn to enable you to use assessment records more effectively. Take account of children's individual learning needs identified in assessment records when planning activities, rather than relying on memory alone
- provide more opportunities for children to make their own decisions about what materials and tools they think they may need, to complete self-chosen projects
- endeavour to bring some consistency to the way assessment records are kept and used and consider how parents know about their child's progress toward the early learning goals.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk