



Bride Valley Fledglings

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY312454
Inspection date	21 March 2006
Inspector	Carol Johnstone
Setting Address	Thorners C of E (VA) Primary School, Litton Cheney, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 9AU
Telephone number	01308 482410
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Registered person	Bride Valley Fledglings
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 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?

Bride Valley Fledglings opened in 2005. It operates from one room and a conservatory within Thorners C of E Primary School in Litton Cheney, near Dorchester.

It is open from 09:15 to 12:00 on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. There are afternoon sessions on Monday, Wednesday and Friday that operate from 13:00 to 15:30. The group operates in term time only.

A maximum of 20 children from 2 years to under 5 years may attend at any one time.

There are currently 11 children on roll. Of these, 9 receive funding for nursery education.

There are four staff employed. Of these, two hold appropriate qualifications in childcare.

The setting receive support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are protected from the spread of illness as children who are unwell are excluded. In addition there are guidelines for parents in the sickness policy advising them of exclusion periods. Children have clean tables for their snack and mealtimes, as staff wipe them down with antibacterial spray before use. Plastic gloves and antibacterial wipes are used for changing nappies to ensure hygiene. However, the procedures for when and how nappies are to be changed needs to be clarified with parents to ensure that they are done as soon as is necessary. Children learn about their personal hygiene through regular hand washing after the toilet and before snack and lunchtime. They also learn that hands need to be washed before cooking. Children use liquid soap and paper towels to minimise the risk of cross infection. Children also learn to help themselves to tissues when they need to blow their nose.

Children have healthy snacks of fruit each day. They also learn about vegetables when they make and taste vegetable soup. In addition, staff remind parents on a regular basis in the newsletters to promote healthy eating when selecting items for children's lunch boxes. Children have access to water throughout the session to ensure adequate fluid levels. They are also offered milk and juice at snack time.

Children have a wide range of physical play so that they can practise a variety of movements. Children play in the outside area on most days to get fresh air. They play "traffic lights" where they run and stop and "follow the leader" around the playing field. They have bikes, trikes and cars to practice their pedalling skills. In addition, staff arrange "obstacle courses" in the indoor play room. Children use a variety of movements to balance on the beams, to climb, jump, wriggle and bend to go through hoops. Children practise their fine motor skills through using pencils, paintbrushes, scissors, rollers and cutters.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are protected from unsuitable staff working with them as all staff have full reference and police checks taken up. To avoid any risk, parent helpers and volunteers are not left unsupervised with children and are not allowed to help with

toileting duties. The group operates from within a primary school and has a separate entrance via a lockable door and door bell. There is an inner door to the classroom which children cannot open by themselves. However, the outer door is not consistently locked.

The manager ensures that the staff/children ratios are always met, however the supervision of children is inconsistent at times, especially when children are in the outdoor play area. It has been identified by the manager that additional staff are urgently needed and this is currently being addressed.

Toys and resources are cleaned and checked regularly to ensure that they are safe for children to use and younger children are unable to access smaller items which may be choking hazards. Children become familiar with the procedures for fire drills and new staff are informed of the procedure during their induction period so they can correctly assist children in an emergency. There is a visit planned from the local fire service to talk to the children about fire safety and the local police officer visits the children on a regular basis to talk to the children about safety. There are written procedures for outings giving clear guidelines to staff on how to keep the children safe. Children hold on to a rope when out walking to prevent them from becoming lost. Additional parent helpers are always arranged to increase the adult ratios.

The manager has a clear understanding of child protection issues and would be able to support a child in the event of a concern. She is aware of the need to record details and knows which agencies to contact for assistance. However, other staff are inconsistent in their knowledge. Child protection training is currently being planned for all staff. There is a comprehensive written child protection policy in place. This also outlines the procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff. The policy is available to parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a very wide range of resources to choose from that are appropriate for all ages and abilities. Children particularly enjoy a good choice of construction play which helps their hand eye coordination and knowledge of shapes. Children also have a large selection of puzzles to try and there are some interesting items such as giant dice set out each day on the maths table. Children have easy access to all resources as they are either on low shelves or in clearly marked drawers.

Activities are mainly unstructured, with children deciding what they want to play with. There is one structured activity during each session such as cookery or card making. Children mostly enjoy their time in the group, but some become bored and restless at times due to the inconsistency of stimulating and challenging interaction from staff. This is particularly so for the more able children. For very young children under 3 years, the implementation of the birth to three framework is imminent. This will help staff plan and guide the activities for this age group. Children have regular contact with the reception class in the school and their teachers. This encourages their social interaction and familiarity with the school that most of them will soon attend.

Nursery education

Children are confident to leave their carers when they arrive. They make firm friendships with each other. They demonstrate a sense of belonging to the group by knowing where to hang their coats and where to find their baskets. Children learn to care for living things and the local environment. They look after their pet goldfish and have recently visited a conservation area. Children are independent and enjoy making choices about their play. Children show interest in numbers and join in with number rhymes and songs. Some children are able to use number names during play and in a large group during cookery, they count the minutes it will take to cook their gingerbread men. Children show interest in weighing and measuring pasta, lentils and chickpeas to see which is the heaviest. Children are beginning to use positional and size language. They see shapes around the room on posters and on the maths table. Children are able to use language to explain what they are doing and express their ideas. They enjoy hearing favourite nursery rhymes and can anticipate what comes next in their favourite stories. Children independently look at books in the book corner. Children have access to pencils and paper each day and are beginning to ascribe meaning to marks. Some children are beginning to write their names on their work. Most children are able to differentiate colours during story time. Children join in with ring games such as "Mulberry Bush" and enjoy favourite songs. Children use their imagination during role play, for example making a "den" out of cushions in the book corner. Children are beginning to understand how to use their senses. They are interested to smell the spices brought in for the gingerbread men and try to describe what they smell like. Children are able to express their ideas during art and craft work, however some of the art work activities are pre-cut and adult led. Children have a wide range of physical play. They are able to practise a range of movements and they are beginning to have a sense of space. Children are able to stop when told and change direction, for example during "traffic lights" in the outdoor area. Children are able to use pushing and pulling movements such as when they are playing with the train sets and they practise their hand- eye coordination with the use of pencils and paintbrushes.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Planning is comprehensive and covers all of the areas of learning each week. However, the recent loss of qualified staff has had an impact on the levels of support that children have. Long-standing staff have a very secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage, the areas of learning and how to challenge children. However, more recent staff do not. This results in children not having a consistent amount of stimulating and challenging interaction during their play. Children's assessments are satisfactory. Staff who are secure in their knowledge are able to complete meaningful observations of the children. These are used to complete the tick boxes of the stepping stones in the children's scrapbooks. However, although these are assessed at the end of each term and areas for development identified, this information is not used to direct the activities for each child. Consequently the next steps to help children's progression are not effectively planned. Overall, children make satisfactory progress across the areas of learning. Staff are warm and friendly to the children and there are positive relationships between them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about the cultures and religions of others. They have recently celebrated the Chinese New Year and made a large dragon to dance with. They also did some sponge painting of Chinese symbols and tried eating noodles with chopsticks. Children have a range of posters, books and toys that reflect positive images of diversity. There are also discussions about children from other countries using a globe in circle time. Children regularly practise the "kind hands" rules of the group and this helps them learn how to care for each other. Children's behaviour is managed adequately. However, some children become bored and restless at times and this is not always addressed effectively.

There is a trained special needs coordinator who supports children with additional needs. She works with parents to observe and monitor children where there are concerns. Children who require specific support have one-to-one time with her and she is in regular contact with other agencies who can provide additional support. She keeps her knowledge up to date through attending regular meetings with other coordinators in the area.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. They are encouraged to stay with children when they first start attending to help them settle. There is an active parent committee and rota and on most days at least one parent helps out in the group. There is a newsletter at the beginning of each term to tell parents what topics will be covered. Parents are invited to give feedback to the group through completion of a questionnaire once a year and their suggestions are invited and welcomed. The planning of activities is clearly displayed for parents on the notice board. Each child has a scrapbook which is sent home twice a year. This contains observations, photos and a tick chart of the Foundation Stage stepping stones. For parents of funded children, this information does not always fully explain where children are in their progress and what plans are in place to help them reach the next steps. Parents feel that staff are friendly and approachable and that they know the children well.

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

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The premises used by the group are bright and welcoming for children. The resources are organised to provide specific areas that are familiar to the children. These include a role play corner, writing table, book corner and maths area. The conservatory is used for circle time. It also contains an interest table where children bring in show and tell items related to the current topic.

The group are experiencing an ongoing period of change. There has been a recent move to premises within the school and some sessions are shared with children from the reception classes. In addition the group have recently lost two qualified staff. These factors impact on how sessions are organised and consequently they lack

structure and clarity at times. In addition staff are not always clearly deployed to support the children effectively.

Documentation is clear and comprehensive. All the necessary policies and procedures are in place to give clear guidelines on all aspects of care. The documentation is stored confidentially.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager encourages staff to train and develop. There are regular staff meetings and all staff are invited to input their ideas into the activities. The provision is monitored through regular questionnaires and feedback from parents. In addition, the group work closely with Sure Start and utilise their suggestions. There is a staff appraisal system in place to monitor staff performance. However, there have been no staff appraisals for two years. Consequently the quality of staff performance and the teaching practice is not being monitored effectively.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, there were several recommendations made. The first was to ensure that visitor details were always recorded with the times of arrival and departure. This has been addressed effectively to ensure that all visitors to the group are recorded. It was recommended that all parent helpers became familiar with the emergency evacuation procedure. This has been addressed as the procedure is now displayed and parent helpers and volunteers have to sign that they have read and understood it. This means that they would be able to assist children in the event of an emergency. Behaviour management strategies were not consistently applied at the last inspection. Staff have now attended behaviour management training courses. The management of children's behaviour is now adequate, although on occasion, some issues are not addressed consistently. The organisation of space and resources did not meet the needs of all children at the last inspection. The group have now changed premises and have organised the rooms to include specific areas such as a book corner, role-play area, writing table etc. This gives children familiarity and easy access to resources. At the last inspection it was noted that the premises were not secure and that there was potential for children to leave them unsupervised. Although the premises have now changed, this remains an issue.

Following the nursery education inspection, there were three key issues to address. The first was to ensure that assessments were used to help support staff in knowing how to challenge and encourage children to think for themselves and move on to the next steps of learning. The group have started to address this, however it requires further development. The second key issue was to create opportunities for children to solve practical number problems. The group now have a maths table containing various resources to encourage use of numbers and problem-solving. The final key issue was to ensure that the organisation of time, staff deployment and resources were maximised to offer the children the best learning opportunities at all times. The deployment of staff and organisation of activities remains an issue for 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.

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 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 that the premises are always secure so that unauthorised persons cannot gain access and that children cannot leave unsupervised
- ensure that children are effectively supervised at all times
- ensure that all staff have a secure understanding of child protection issues and the procedures to follow in the event of a concern
- monitor the performance of staff on a regular basis to ensure that their practice is effective in supporting children's learning (also applies to nursery education)
- deploy staff effectively to ensure that children have sufficient levels of stimulating and challenging interaction during their play (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- use the information gained from observations and assessments to plan and guide the activities for each child to help them progress to the next steps of learning.

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