



Downsend School - Leatherhead Lodge

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY307900
Inspection date	27 April 2006
Inspector	Daphne Jane Brown
Setting Address	Downsend Lodge, 13 Epsom Road, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 8ST
Telephone number	01372 372123
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Registered person	Downsend School Limited
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Downsend Leatherhead Lodge is one of three co-educational pre-preparatory schools for children aged two and a half to six years, attached to Downsend Independent Preparatory School, Leatherhead, which was founded in 1891 and is owned by Cognita. The Leatherhead Lodge was founded in 1985 and has its own Head teacher and staff. It is in the suburban town of Leatherhead and serves the surrounding community.

The school is open each weekday from 08:55 to 15:30 term time only and provides an extended day from 08:00 to 17:30, term time only. Children have access to a large fully equipped secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 135 children aged from 2 to 6 years on roll. The school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting receives support from the Early Years Childcare Service.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children develop good personal hygiene routines and self-care skills and the environment is clean and well maintained. There are effective procedures in place to prevent the spread of infection. Most children understand why they need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating food, however this is not consistently reinforced by all members of staff.

Children's accidents are managed appropriately and there are clear procedures in place to ensure that children's medication is administered appropriately, with parental agreement. However, written parental consent has not been obtained for staff to seek emergency advice or treatment. This restricts staff from acting in accordance with parent's wishes, in the event of an emergency.

Children enjoy a range of nutritious meals, which are cooked on site. Children are also able to access their drinks easily. This enables them to respond to their body's needs, when they are thirsty.

Parents give prior written consent to administer medication that ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. However, written parental permission to seek emergency medical treatment has not been requested.

Children enjoy many opportunities to take part in physical play, both indoors and out, that contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are safe and secure for children. Staff ensure children are fully supervised at all times. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure visitors to the pre-school are always accompanied by staff to safeguard children. The premises provide a spacious environment for children to play freely and safely.

Most children have easy access to a good range of toys and resources which are safe and appropriate for their age.

Children begin to learn about safety. Staff give children clear explanations about safety.

There are sufficient procedures in place to protect children in the event of an emergency. Children practice evacuation, ensuring they are familiar with the relevant procedures to follow to keep themselves safe.

Children are protected against harm and abuse as staff are aware of child protection policies and understand the appropriate procedures to follow, should they have any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are extremely happy and settled. They develop confidence and high self-esteem as they enjoy extremely close and warm relationships with staff. This enables children to feel totally secure and comfortable within the setting.

Children in the nursery develop their social skills within a small, homely environment. However the layout of the rooms for younger children and the availability and accessibility of resources hinders children's development in many areas of their learning. They play happily alongside other children and, as a result of the staff's sensitive interaction, begin to learn to share, take turns and co-operate. Although there are written plans they do not show how more able children can be sufficiently challenged and less able children fully supported in their learning and development. Regular assessments and observations are not carried out on the younger children to identify their achievements, resulting in children's profiles not being very informative and cannot be used to inform the planning.

Older children flourish within the school as staff are extremely competent, highly experienced and knowledgeable early years practitioners. They have an excellent understanding of child development, enabling them to plan an exciting and imaginative range of play experiences for children. Their individual learning needs are fully recognised and addressed in the implementation of all activities. All activities are adapted or extended, wherever necessary, to ensure that all children are challenged appropriately. A full, detailed record of children's progress is maintained and staff carry out regular observations and assessments to monitor development and contribute to the children's profile. As well as formal assessment of abilities, staff evaluate children's learning and use this information very well in planning and adapting future work.

All children are extremely happy and confident. They show interest and motivation for all activities and are particularly settled in the daily routine. As a result of this, children develop positive attitudes towards learning and enjoy their time at school.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are extremely experienced, well qualified and dedicated early years practitioners. All staff are very sensitive to the

children's differing needs and demonstrate a wealth of knowledge of each child's personal learning needs and abilities.

Some staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, enabling them to deliver an extremely stimulating, creative and fun range of play and learning activities for older children. This enables them to plan activities and play opportunities which challenge and stimulate older children appropriately. There is a very busy and purposeful atmosphere in all these classes, demonstrating that older children are appropriately stimulated and challenged. Planning and assessment for the younger children's development is minimal and activities are not evaluated to help inform future planning.

Staff and children enjoy extremely happy and warm relationships. Children approach staff happily and confidently and receive plenty of praise and positive reassurance. This increases children's self-esteem and results in a very positive and harmonious environment for children. All children are confident and sociable. They talk enthusiastically about their activities and show great pride in their work. Children develop very good skills in independence. Older children take care of their own needs and pour their own drinks at snack time. They self-register on arrival and select their own play materials and resources. Children are extremely polite and courteous to one another. They wait their turn before talking as part of group discussion. They say 'excuse me' to one another and need very little reminding about saying please and thank you. This demonstrates children's very well developed social skills. Children clearly understand acceptable behaviour and quickly remind one another about the importance of sharing. They negotiate with each other well and successfully resolve their own differences.

Older children express themselves freely and fluently, showing extremely well developed language skills. They engage in lengthy conversation with their peers and adults and convey their needs and feelings extremely effectively. Children develop and extend their language through discussion, conversation with adults and the use of books and stories. They use words descriptively. For example, during a group discussion children wrote a poem about a dinosaur using lots of lovely descriptive language. Children's language skills are extended well through effective questioning by staff. There are excellent opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. They use chalks, pencils and crayons competently, progressing from mark making to writing their own names and words from memory. Children develop a very good understanding of letters and sounds as they participate extremely enthusiastically in 'Jolly Phonics' sessions. They build on their knowledge of the alphabet using the Jolly Phonics scheme, to develop an understanding of individual letters, blending sounds and rhyming words. This enables children to make very good progress with their reading, as they sound words out and identify matching sounds and letters.

Children's mathematical skills in the transition classes are excellent. They use numbers confidently throughout the daily routine. They count the number of children present and enjoy many practical number and counting activities. This encourages children to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts. They undertake simple calculation and use their reasoning skills to put numbers in order and complete number sequences. They have a very clear understanding of the concepts of colour, shape and size as they play a variety of games and curriculum plans show

that there are a number of activities and resources available for children to sort, order, match and identify shape, including 3 dimensional shapes. Younger children enjoy and join in number rhymes and use their fingers to represent numbers. They are beginning to learn about shape and volume through every day activities.

Children throughout the school have many opportunities to explore, investigate and observe nature. They undertake many activities outside, such as planting seeds and bulbs and watching them grow. Children talk about growth and change as part of topic work. At present the children are learning about how caterpillars turn into butterflies and the role play areas are 'Palaeontology Labs'. All children competently and confidently use a range of tools and media. They select computer programs and clearly understanding how they work. The children in transition have weekly French lessons and talk about the wider world as part of topic work.

All children have many opportunities to move in a variety of ways to develop their physical skills. They move around freely inside and negotiate steps and obstacles competently. There are extensive school grounds enabling children to play outside throughout the year with a range of equipment and apparatus. This enables them to climb, crawl, balance and use wheeled toys, enhancing their overall physical development. Additional activities such as swimming, judo, football and dance enables children to develop their gross motor skills and gain muscle control. Children develop their manipulative skills and dexterity by undertaking threading activities, using scissors, handling pegs and using chinks, pens and pencils.

Older children express themselves creatively through role-play, arts and crafts and imaginative play. They make excellent use of the very well designed and resourced role-play area. There are extensive opportunities for children to express themselves freely. There are many examples of children's art and craft work on display showing children have participated in modelling, collage, clay modelling, using dough, roller painting, self-portrait drawings and paintings and making their own books. As part of the dinosaur project children use a variety of textures to make a sample of what they thought the dinosaur skin would have felt like. This demonstrates that children use a wide range of textures and techniques, enabling them to develop their own ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are respected. Information is obtained from parents regarding each child's home religion, language and personal likes and dislikes to enable staff to address these factors in daily practice. There are limited opportunities for younger children to learn about the wider world, as there are few positive images reflecting diversity available to them. This restricts children from learning about and developing a positive attitude towards diversity.

There are some effective strategies used for managing children's behaviour. Staff work consistently to provide a fair and positive environment. Children behave well and clearly understand the boundaries. As a result children's spiritual, moral, social and culture development is fostered.

Staff are committed to working in partnership with parents and provide lots of written information regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum.

The partnership with parents is good. Staff provide a wealth of information and actively encourage parents to become involved in their children's care and education. All parents receive an informative brochure about the Downsend school, giving them full details of all school policies and procedures relating to the Foundation Stage age groups, staff information, forthcoming activities and curriculum news. Staff in the transition and kindergarten classes display their weekly timetables and curriculum plans to enable parents to feel fully informed of all children's forthcoming topics and activities, enabling them to extend children's learning at home. There are many opportunities for parents to become closer involved with the school. They can act as Class Representatives and be actively involved in fundraising events and social occasions. Children's progress is regularly discussed with parents, both on an informal and formal basis. Staff ensure that parents are fully involved in their children's assessment, enabling them to share their own personal knowledge of their children's development. Staff in the nursery department tend to operate slightly differently to the rest of the school. They have a separate newsletter to the rest of the school and this is done each term.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff work well together as a dedicated and supportive team. Children receive individual attention and most activities are organised sufficiently to ensure children can participate. There are effective procedures in place to ensure that all staff are fully vetted and cleared to work with children. Staff have an understanding of the National Standards and are aware of the conditions of their registration. Appropriate adult to child ratios are maintained and effective arrangements are in place to cover staff absence. Most regulatory documentation is in place and is kept up-to-date, however the record of attendance does not always accurately reflect children's times of arrival and departure. Most parental consent has been obtained.

Some areas of the pre-school do not always promote children's independence and development as the accessibility of resources is limited and children are not always presented with appropriate challenge.

The leadership and management are good. The Head of the school also works one and a half days as a transition class teacher. She combines these roles extremely well and consequently has a first-hand experience of delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum and leading the team directly. She is instrumental in motivating all staff in providing extremely high standards. All staff members show extreme dedication to their roles and responsibilities, but she has found that her requests have not always been carried out at the lower end of the school. Staff are highly motivated and continually review practice to make improvements. Staff work consistently hard, but there is lack of communication between the nursery and the rest of the school with regard to curriculum planning to ensure children can make a smooth and seamless transition between the nursery, kindergarten and transition classes.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first inspection since registration under the Children Act. However at the last education inspection the school was asked to devise a system to record the contributions from parents about their children's achievements and progress to ensure a holistic picture of the child in it's profile. The school now has in place a comprehensive registration form which requests details about the children's likes and dislikes, what they can do or can't do, prior to registration. This has meant that children's individual needs are being catered for very well.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration. 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 the register is accurate and up to date at all times and includes details of the arrival and departure times of the children
- increase the range of resources promoting positive images of diversity in society
- obtain written parental permission to the seeking of medical advice or treatment at the time of the placement
- improve the procedures for hand washing to ensure consistent practice throughout the school

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):

- review the current planning and assessment procedure in the nursery and kindergarten to ensure that activities are evaluated and children's records kept up to date.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk