



## **Cowdown Day Nursery**

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 507866  
**Inspection date** 04 May 2006  
**Inspector** Mandy Gannon

**Setting Address** Cowdown Farm House, Cowdown Lane, Andover, Hampshire,  
SP11 6LE  
**Telephone number** 01264 363098  
**E-mail**  
**Registered person** Cowdown Nursery Ltd  
**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](http://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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Cowdown Nursery opened in 1996. It operates from the ground floor of a farmhouse on the outskirts of Andover. The nursery has access to six playrooms and a large fully enclosed garden with two sheep in an adjoining paddock. The Nursery serves a wide geographical area.

There are currently 33 children on role. This includes 14 funded three and four-year-olds. All children attend full time. The group has consideration for children

who have been identified as having special needs or whose first language is not English.

The nursery opens five days a week 50 weeks of the year. Sessions last from 08:00 to 18:00.

There are 12 full time staff who work with the children. Currently, seven have Early Years qualifications to NVQ level II or III. Other staff members are currently working towards a recognised early year's qualification and access regular training opportunities. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children begin to learn about how to keep themselves healthy through discussion about healthy food. A healthy balanced diet is cooked by the staff on the premises, an ample portion of fruit and vegetables are available at mealtimes and for snacks. Staff are aware of individual dietary requirements and provide organic food for babies. All meal times are social occasions, the children of the nursery come together and siblings can sit alongside each other. However, good hygiene practices in the dining room are not always observed, some staff and children do not wash their hands prior to mealtimes and snack, food is carried outside between rooms uncovered and good practice is not always maintained. Older children are aware of the importance to wash their hands and are developing an understanding why we wash out hands.

Staff have an understanding of children's individual health, medical and dietary requirements and so maintain children's health. Staff are first aid trained and first aid boxes are adequately maintained. A record of the administration of medication is in place. However, there is insufficient detail and confidentiality is not always maintained in the accident and incident records.

Staff discuss with parents the individual needs of babies, for eating and sleeping, this ensures they settle well and contributes to their wellbeing. Staff follow routines, which reassures the babies and provides security.

All children have regular daily access to an extensive outside area, which adjoins farmland. Children explore the grounds and beyond taking walks up to the nearby forest to observe nature. They are competent in climbing on apparatus, sliding down slides and balancing on planks. Babies crawl on the grass. Staff offer support and encouragement. They provide suitable activities enabling children to gain new skills such as learning to stand walk and balance along planks. Activities provide suitable challenges and meet the needs of the children. Children progress well in their physical development and gain a positive attitude to exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in safe, secure environment. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through discussions with practitioners. They talk about why it is not safe to run inside. Children practise fire drills each term helping them develop an awareness of potential safety issues, although information to record and evaluate these is not sufficient. A new member of staff is aware of procedures, fire exits and the assembly point.

Children are kept safe at nursery. Staff are vigilant and identify and remove any potential hazards, such as stair gates being in place and ensuring sockets are covered. Risk assessments are carried out, although paperwork detail is not always maintained. Security locks are in place and staff are vigilant when unknown persons approach the property. Effective systems are in place to record visitors to the group, which are consistently maintained.

Children are safeguarded and protected from harm because staff have a strong knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and how to implement local procedures. Staff have attended training and continue to update their knowledge. Children move safely around the inside and outside learning environment. They make choices from a good range of suitable, well- maintained, appropriate equipment and resources.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident, involved and settled at nursery. Staff know the children well and are aware of their families and individual needs. Babies and young children build positive relationships with the staff helping them to feel secure. Children are offered a wide range of exciting activities and experiences. Babies are supported to explore their senses as they show interest and wonder looking at themselves in a low-level mirror. Toddlers show interest in what they do, they enjoy dressing up and trying on hats, they dance to the music and sing along. Children enjoy the sand room where they take off their socks and shoes and immerse themselves, imagining they are at the beach.

Children communicate very well using words; younger children are supported using sign language. Staff are responsive to their communication and attentive to their needs. Children enjoy cuddles from staff; they are given reassurance if they are tired or upset. Staff working with children under three years continues to develop their understanding of the Birth to three matters framework. They use the framework in their planning and observations of children's progress. An exciting, stimulating learning environment is provided, in which babies and young children are interested and involved. For example, children gain new skills in the garden as they balance along a plank with the close support and encouragement of a staff member.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress and the majority of the staff have a secure knowledge of how children learn. Continuous provision is provided where a wide range of resources are always available for the children to independently select. The room leader is responsible for the planning, monitoring and recording and provides a good variety of activities. However, other staff are developing their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and currently have limited understanding.

Children have access to an extensive rural outside area and nearby forest, where they observe the changes in nature. They plant flowers in tubs, water and nurture them, watching them grow. They see sheep in the neighbouring field and develop their understanding of why we may keep sheep. Children are confident using climbing and balancing skills, they build their own obstacle course using planks and milk crates negotiating with dexterity.

Children are very well behaved, they form firm relationships with each other and the staff. They enjoy stories and listen with interest, participating and recalling the events in familiar text. Children are confident in contributing to conversations; they participate at circle time and join in a discussion about artefacts that have been bought into nursery from other countries. For example, a child demonstrates how at home he eats rice using chopsticks. Some children are aware of the sounds and names of letters. Children are developing their mark making skills with some children competent in writing their name.

Children learn to count in stories, songs and everyday events. They use mathematics to solve problems such as counting cups for snacks, 'how many do they need on their table?' They begin to understand simple calculations if they have too many cups. They learn positional language when they are asked to stand in front of or behind another child.

Children play well together in imaginary games, they take turns and share, supporting each other. For example, they sail away in a boat in the garden and decide what they will need to take on their trip to the seaside. Children have access to a craft area where they can freely access resources and art materials independently. For example, they make models using recycled materials. Children enjoy selecting and listening to a variety of music that they put on a compact disc player.

The room leader observes and monitors all the children's progress regularly, identifies targets and incorporates in the planning that she completes. She has a sound understanding, realistic expectations and a good knowledge of individual children. They are supported to consolidate their learning and move onto the next stage. However, some staff that have recently joined this age group currently have limited knowledge and understanding of the Foundation stage and therefore may not support children fully.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and valued, as staff are aware of their individual needs.

Children build sound relationships with their peers and the staff. Children show good levels of confidence and self-esteem because staff praise and encourage them constantly developing their sense of achievement. They play well and cooperate with one another supported well by practitioners who help children think about their actions and how to resolve conflict. Children are encouraged to be kind to one another and have a good understanding of others needs. They are reminded to take turns and share. Staff effectively supports children with the management of their behaviour helping them to develop their understanding of right from wrong, although procedures to record incidents of behaviour omit some detail.

Children benefit as staff have a good knowledge of their family circumstances and therefore can meet their individual needs. Effective systems are in place to build secure relationships and ensure children have a sense of belonging to the group. They gain an awareness of themselves and an understanding of the wider world through activities and experiences linked to topics, although links to the local community continue to be developed. Children learn about various cultures, festivals, customs, gender and disabilities and this is reflected in their learning environment. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Strong relationships are built between staff and parents and secure communication links are in place between home and the nursery. This contributes to the children's wellbeing and positive relationships are formed. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child to enable staff to meet their individual needs. Children's progress and achievements are shared through communication books, verbally and regular parents meetings. Parents receive information through newsletters, parents notice board. Parents and staff work well together to meet the child's individual needs and progress their learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. The organisation of the nursery and deployment of staff is effective ensuring children are happily engaged in activities and secure in their surroundings. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The effective implementation of policies and procedures helps promote children's welfare, care and learning. However, documentation such as accident books, registers and incident records are not effectively maintained with sufficient detail, which impacts on children's welfare. The leadership and management recognise strengths and have identified some areas for improvement and taken steps to move forward. The leadership and management are good.

Children benefit because staff are suitably qualified and enhance their knowledge and skills through regular training opportunities. Staff are supported by management through regular staff meetings, planning meetings and an appraisal system. Teaching practices are evaluated and the management are aware of staff's training requirements and are proactive in securing courses. Although some staff currently

have a limited knowledge of the stepping stones and how children learn, training needs have been identified to ensure they are able to support children's progress fully in the near future.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last Children Act inspection, the nursery were asked to; record the time of arrival and departure for staff and visitors; develop procedures to protect staff from allegations of abuse; ensure that there is a named member of staff who is responsible for the management of behaviour and sufficiently records issues and shares with parents; make available to parents a written statement providing details of the regulatory body; and provide appropriate seating for staff working with the under twos. The time of arrival and departure of visitors is recorded in a visitors book. Management ensure they record the time of arrival and departure of staff. The nurseries policy states that staff should not be left alone with children, doors remain open. Staff have attended basic and advanced child protection training. The manager is the designated person responsible for behaviour management and has an incident record in place that is shared with parents, although it is not always sufficiently maintained. Details of the regulatory body are available in the policies and on the parents notice board. A small settee is available for staff so that they may sit comfortably when working and feeding the under two's.

At the last nursery education inspection, the nursery were asked to; provide opportunities to real life technological items; opportunities to develop emergent writing; planning of the curriculum to show how continuous provision is used to promote broad learning objectives; opportunities for children to play musical instruments and listen to varied music medium; and staff's recording of where children are in their learning so that they can help them move onto the next stage. The children have access to a varied selection of real life technological items, they take photographs using a camera, they are competent in using a computer and mouse, they listen to music by independently accessing a compact disc player. Children develop emergent writing by accessing pencils and paper independently, they mark make with confidence. The room leader plans the curriculum making sure that the continuous provision covers all the six areas of learning, her evaluations ensure that all areas are covered and identifies any areas for further development. Children enjoy music, they have access to musical instruments and select from a variety of music classical to popular to listen to on the compact disc player. The room leader records children's learning and identifies their next steps clearly. However, other room staff have limited understanding of how children learn and the next steps in their learning.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Ofsted received a concern in June 2004 regarding the suitability of the person in charge. This related to National Standard 1 (Suitable Person). Ofsted liaised with outside agencies and carried out its own investigation. As a result the provision remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made to parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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 sufficient hygiene practices are routinely maintained and consistently implemented
- develop procedures for recording the time of arrival and departure of children
- ensure that there are effective procedures in place for checking that staff are suitable to work with children
- maintain sufficient detail and confidentiality in accident and incident records

### **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 an effective plan to ensure all staff develop their understanding and knowledge of the Foundation Stage.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)