



Downside Children's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Downside children's pre-school opened in 2003. It is privately run and operates within the grounds of Downside Lower School. The pre-school serves the local area. There are currently 80 children from three to under five years on roll. Of these, 80 receive funding for nursery education. The Pre-School is registered to provide sessional care and out of school care for 40 children from 3 years to under 8 years. and opens from 09:00 to 18:00 during term time and all day during school holidays.

The pre-school and out of school group use the main play room, two separate classroom areas, and has use of a laundry room, kitchen and music room. There is a secure outside play area which consists of a covered section, a hard and soft play area.

The pre-school is open on weekdays during term time only from 09.00 to 11.30, and from 13.00 to 15.00. The out of school group are open from 15:30 to 18:00 and school holiday care from 09:00 to 18:00. The setting is able to provide support to children with learning disabilities or difficulties and children who have English as an additional language.

There are nine staff including the manager who work with the children and of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 3 or above. Five staff members are working towards level 3 and 2. The pre-school receives advisory support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff follow effective health and hygiene policies and procedures. Staff's practice is clearly reflected in the written procedures. For example, they are vigilant and swift when cleaning up after snacks and messy activities. Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through well-organised routines. They wash their hands after using the toilet, knowing to wash them again after messy activities and before eating their snack. Children develop their understanding through positive role modelling and discussions with the staff. Staff are well informed about the children's health and adequate documentation is in place to support this. All suitable consents are in place from parents. Accidents are documented to ensure a full record is kept and shared with parents. The majority of members of staff hold current first aid certificates, this ensures any accidents to the children are dealt with appropriately.

Children are able to have a snack during each session. They sit in small key worker groups and it is a happy social occasion. Children are learning the importance of healthy eating by the variety of healthy snacks provided. For example, a variety of different fruits and vegetables is provided. Staff encourage the children to try new tastes by getting them to "have a little taste" to see if they like it. Children do have opportunity to take part in the preparation of some snacks such as making sandwiches, pizza and cakes and this is incorporated into a theme and not as a regular practice. Children have the choice of a drink either water or milk, their independence skills are encouraged by the children being able to pour their own water out. Children do not become thirsty during the session because they have access to drinking water, children are encouraged to help themselves to a drink whenever they wish. The practitioners take account of parents wishes and any dietary needs of the children. Extra care is taken if any child has an allergy or specific dietary requirement.

Children enjoy daily opportunities for outside physical activities. They are able to run around and practise skills, such as running, pedalling and balancing using the equipment in the garden. Children enjoy playing games which promote hand and eye coordination, including throwing bean bags into boxes, waving streamers and have fun playing imaginative games with some boxes which have been made into a train. Children learn to negotiate space steering themselves when running and on bikes around each other and equipment. Children's development of large motor skills is promoted by the staff who are actively involved in the games, encouraging children to try new activities and demonstrating techniques. Children enjoy moving to music and using their bodies to take part in action songs and rhymes. Children's dexterity and hand and eye coordination is developing as they manipulate puzzle pieces, play dough, pencils and small world figures.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which is well-maintained and well planned out with lots of space for children to move freely and safely around activities. Examples of children's work and displays of photographs makes the setting attractive and shows the children's achievements for all to see. Children stay safe because there are effective measures in place regarding people having access to the building. All parents and visitors are greeted at the door and visitors sign in and out. Children's safety is paramount. Risk assessments are in place and daily checks are made of the outside area which is very well appointed. Children learn about safety through appropriate risk and challenge. They are gaining an awareness of keeping themselves safe in pre-school as staff explain and practise simple procedures with them such as emergency evacuation, and the boundaries to keep children safe such as not running inside, picking up toys so they do not fall over them and being aware of the correct way to carry chairs and using scissors correctly. This helps them gain an awareness of safety and for them to take some responsibility for keeping themselves safe. Where some children have difficulties responding to the boundaries, staff manage this effectively by explaining to the children in a simple, but positive manner, aimed at their level of understanding so they can operate safely within their environment.

Children use a broad range of safe, well-maintained and developmentally appropriate resources. All items are regularly checked for safety. Equipment and activities are organised and attractively presented throughout the setting in child height storage units to encourage children to become independent and gain safe access to their resources. This helps children operate safely and take some responsibility for looking after their equipment. Imaginative play areas are well resourced, interesting and are changed regularly to a hospital, hairdressers or a dentist surgery. High adult to child ratios ensure the correct level of supervision is maintained to support the children.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through current policies and procedures for their protection. Staff have sufficient knowledge about child protection and all have attended training in this area. However, a lack of updated information with regard to the written child protection statement could limit the understanding of

any new members of staff to the procedures they need to implement to protect children. Their secure practice ensures any concerns can be dealt with in a sensitive manner and a designated person is responsible to share information with outside agencies to ensure children are protected at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. They have sense of belonging as they come into the pre-school and know the routine well. Children become engaged in a pleasing variety of fun activities which are appropriately challenging. They benefit from the very positive, high quality interaction from the staff who smile and laugh with the children which promotes their development and self-confidence. Children have unlimited access to the music area where they are able to play with a variety of instruments. They enjoy singing and music. For example, in large group times staff use sock puppets and instruments and sing songs such as 'Ten little ducks' and 'what's your name?' to which the children sing to and bang out the rhythm on the lollypop drum. The children had great pleasure participating in these activities.

Staff give appropriate emphasis to the personal, social and emotional needs of young children separating from their carers for the first time. Children rapidly become independent learners because the staff make the effort to provide many different choices of activity and support them in their chosen task. Most children spend their time in a purposeful manner as they move freely around the activities throughout the session. They enjoy exploring new and familiar concepts such as the home corner, small manipulative activities and the creativity area. Children have access to low-level storage shelving, full of a variety of resources. This enables children to learn how to make informed choices and decisions as they independently select what they want to use at the mark making table or at the craft bar. The routine is organised to enable children to work in large and small groups, and to benefit from a good balance between child-led activities, adult-initiated activities and independent play. Most children are able to concentrate and persist at self chosen activities and staff are on hand to support and engage those children whose concentration is limited to help them gain control of their feelings and show an interest in an activity.

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Children are generally making progress due to the staffs' sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn effectively. Plans show interesting activities that challenge and stimulate most children. Evaluation of the activities is in place and provides the staff with information about what has been successful in promoting learning and any aspects that need improvement. As a result most children are motivated and make positive small links in their learning. Staff do not have a consistent system to record children's starting points. However, the extension of children's written observations and assessments to track children's progress through their time at pre-school would enable staff to obtain a clearer picture of the individual children's progress in order to move them forward. This inconsistency in recording does not demonstrate how staff will enable all children to reach their potential in learning. Children who speak English as an additional language are given careful attention to ensure they are able to

participate in all the activities. Staff have high expectations for all children and create a happy learning environment.

Children are interested and eagerly take part in their self-selected activities. They are engaged by the staff that encourages them to try new activities and to persist and complete activities such as puzzles. They concentrate on their chosen task because they enjoy it and are given sufficient support from staff. Most children are beginning to speak out in the large group with confidence and in small groups they ask for help as required and generally work well together. They are beginning to learn to manage their own feelings and use words rather than actions to deal with issues and disagreements which arise. Children are confident to choose and tidy away their own play materials and begin to learn self-care. For example, taking themselves to the toilet and washing hands when they are messy. They receive regular praise for their efforts and achievements.

Children take part in spontaneous conversations, they listen to staff, their peers and respond to instructions. Children's vocabulary is growing and new words are constantly introduced during the activities and they are able to recall and describe past events and experiences. They listen to stories and are beginning to recognise their names, letters and numbers. They have regular access to various writing materials and computer programmes which develop their hand and eye coordination and extend other areas of learning. Children benefit from the access they have to visual displays of letters, labelling in dual languages, pictures and photographs which they refer to during some of the activities. Children also talk about the weather and date. They have spontaneous access to the books and re-tell familiar stories especially when using the story sacks.

Children are introduced to various activities which encourage counting, sorting, grading according to size, and simple calculating activities. For example, throughout the session activities which incorporate numbers, were included in some way such as; in the play dough, coloured matches were available and the children made birthday cakes with candles on and animals. Staff were asking the child's age and how many candles they needed as well as counting up to ten. Finger painting where the children wrote on top of the laminated numbers and counting coloured bears and matching them to the correct written number. Most children can count to ten. They use mathematical language during the activities such as bigger, smaller, in and out

Children enjoy exploring and investigating as they take part in activities watching how things grow and change. For example, growing cress and exploring how it grows and changes. They show curiosity about their environment by being able to experiment through play. For example, children were able to initiate changing the consistency of the sand from dry to wet. Staff were on hand to ask open ended questions about where the water went to and about the texture. Children started off with small amounts in their buckets and gradually as they got more confident they put more in. This was a delight to see children taking their own initiative in their play. Children participate and celebrate in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar festivals and celebrations throughout the year giving them a positive insight into different cultures and beliefs. They are learning about diversity, the local area and the wider world such as visits from the police, fire brigade and dentist, this is extended within the pre-school activities.

The registered provider also provides an after school club and an all day holiday group for older aged children from the adjoining school. Children have the use of the pre-school room which is well resourced with appropriate toys, furniture and equipment to promote play opportunities. During the holidays the group have themed days. The various play activities take into account the children's range of ages and abilities. Staff plan alongside the children which provides a variety of fun, stimulating and challenging play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show a clear sense of belonging. They are confident to approach staff for support when needed and to access their chosen activities. They are encouraged to try new experiences and to select their own play materials. Children begin to learn a sense of responsibility and help tidy toys away. Children are treated as individuals and with respect. They have access to a good range of resources which show positive images of people. Diversity is celebrated in the nursery through discussion, books and enjoying festivals. Children benefit from the staff's positive attitudes, they present themselves as sensitive role models, which in turn helps children to relate to each other and gain a positive understanding of the needs of others. Children are learning to share, take turns, show concern for others, work collaboratively together in various activities and they respond well to direction from adults. For example, staff explain to the children about being kind to others and playing nicely together as friends. All children are welcomed into the nursery and appropriate plans are made for children who have specific needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered because staff make every effort to demonstrate to children the benefits of getting on with each other and the importance of respecting and celebrating everyone's differences.

Children have a good awareness of the boundaries within the pre-school. They benefit from the gentle, fair approach from staff who liaise closely with parents to ensure consistency. Behaviour management issues are managed effectively and children respond to the appropriate strategies used, such as distraction, explanation and compromise. Praise is given freely to children, ensuring that they develop confidence, self-esteem and understand when they have done well. Children are encouraged to use please and thank you appropriately in all situations during the session. Children are familiar with the nursery routines and this clearly helps them to feel secure and have a sense of belonging and ownership.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff are friendly, welcoming and endeavour to build effective relationships. Parents receive daily verbal feedback of their child's progress. The pre-school have set up a formal opportunity for parents to share their child's progress and achievements in parents' sessions. However, there is limited updated information and parents are not fully encouraged to play an active role in their child's learning through lack of information about activities to help them progress between home and pre-school. Children benefit from staff completing home visits before they start and their parents are encouraged to stay with them as long as needed. This enables the children to settle and feel comfortable within the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel secure and confident within the organised environment. This enables them to interact with others and initiate and extend most of their own play and learning. The range of activities are well-planned and organised to help challenge and stimulate the children attending. Children can move safely and freely around activities and enjoy uninhibited space to spread out and play. Staff have built stable relationships with the children and know them well. This ensures children feel secure and confident within the group. Staff demonstrate a real rapport with children they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. They are effectively deployed and spend most of their time interacting with the children. A good quality range of activities for the children enables them to be challenged in most areas and staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of child development and the early learning goals. This impacts on the children as they are busy, engaged and provided with sufficient activities and play opportunities to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

Leadership and Management of the setting are satisfactory.

The pre-school has appropriate aims for the children's care and learning. Many of these are achieved in practice because the staff are experienced and have an understanding of the needs of children and how they learn. The management team have a clear and positive vision for the future. Induction training and qualifications are met and appropriate policies and procedures are implemented to keep the children healthy and safeguard their welfare. However, senior staff roles and responsibilities require clarification to ensure the daily organisation and running of the group is enhanced. At present there is no deputy manager in place. This impacts on the organisation of the pre-school as there would be no one to take charge effectively in the absence of the manager. Each staff member brings their own experiences and strengths to the team which enables them to implement a key worker system. Staff are encouraged to access additional training to further enhance their skills and the manager has taken positive steps to link this to appraisals and professional development of her staff team. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last education inspection the provider agreed to complete the following key issues. ensure that staff are aware of teaching aspects of writing, reading and mathematical development including early literacy phonic sounds of letters. Opportunities for children to write independently, record their own work and record numbers. Provide more information to parents about the six areas of learning in the prospectus, showing details of the stepping stones are used in planning the activities. Continue to develop the assessment system and involve parents regularly.

Staff have attended training to encourage children's early phonic sounds. Staff put into practice from a very early level such as, singing instructions to encourage the

children to listen and gradually introducing sounds when children are ready to learn sounds. Signs around the room to indicate everyday words help the children understand that print carries meaning. Children are encouraged to write their names through various activities within the pre-school and are supported by staff sounding out the letter sounds and counting to ten.

A good selection of familiar words, numbers and letters are displayed around the rooms enabling children an understanding of numbers and letters in order for them to form them correctly.

The prospectus for parents is a working document and is currently undergoing changes. All staff are being encouraged to have input in the changes which include adding aspects of learning through photographs. However, a recommendation has been continued to ensure that parents are more involved in their children's learning through seeing the activities of plans, so they can help them extend their learning at home.

The pre-school use the local authority Foundation Stage profile. The staff have attended a course on how to put it into practice. However a recommendation has been raised to ensure that observations and assessments are used to clearly identify and plan for the next steps for individual children's learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have no complaints made to Ofsted since 1st April 2004.

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 aware to Ofsted.

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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):

- provide a written statement on child protection which includes allegations and

the relevant agency telephone numbers

- ensure there is a named deputy who is able to take charge in the absence of the manager

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):

- ensure that information gathered from children's observations and assessment records is used to clearly identify and plan for the next steps for individual children's learning
- develop information provided for parents about the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and the activity planning to support the extension of children's learning at home.

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