



Durham University Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY257491
Inspection date	13 November 2006
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Registered person	Durham University
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?

Durham University Nursery opened in 1991. It operates from single-storey premises close to Durham city centre. The group serves the needs of university students and staff, as well as the general public.

There are currently 105 children on roll, including 21 children who receive nursery education. Procedures are in place to support children with learning difficulties and or disabilities and for those children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens Monday to Friday, throughout the year, excluding public holidays from 08.00 to 18.00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are 33 members of staff, including the manager, employed to work with the children. Of those, 29 have an early years qualification, and some staff are currently on further training programmes. There are also seven support staff employed. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Good systems are in place for maintaining cleanliness throughout the provision. Cleaners are employed on a daily basis and staff are vigilant throughout the day. All toys are given a thorough clean once a week and more frequently if needed to reduce the spread of germs. Although the sheets and covers used at rest times are changed on a regular basis, children do share the same bedding between changes which does not help to prevent the risk of cross infection. Strict procedures in place for the administration of medication and recording of accidents to promote children's welfare. There are high levels of first aid trained staff available should an accident occur. Older children know to wash their hands before they eat and after they use the toilet, some have a growing awareness of why this is important and most carry out this task independently. This promotes the development of good personal hygiene habits and helps to reduce children's susceptibility to infection and common illnesses.

Much use is made of the outdoor area so children can get fresh air and exercise on a daily basis. They are also taken on regular walks and out in their pushchairs. Older children have free access to outdoors unless the weather is exceptionally inclement. In addition, children do lots of energetic physical activities in the nursery rooms as they enthusiastically join in songs and rhymes to help them with their learning as well as physical coordination.

Children are very well nourished. Menus are planned using mostly fresh ingredients and are varied to encourage children to try different tastes. The nursery works with parents to develop the menu and their suggestions are considered and accommodated wherever possible, for example, some parents are keen to introduce more organic foods for children so the nursery is taking steps to address this. Children enjoy healthy meals, such as Caribbean chicken, homemade burgers and pasta dishes and snacks of fresh fruit and toast. Special diets, such as vegetarian and lactose free are given careful consideration and are well catered for to promote children's welfare and work in partnership with parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery is warm and welcoming with careful attention paid to displaying information for parents and children's art work. Pictures, posters and photographs are displayed at children's eye level so they can easily see them and mobiles and voile suspended from the ceiling helps to create an interesting and exciting environment. All parents and children are warmly greeted on their arrival creating a happy, friendly, atmosphere.

Rooms are well organised to allow children freedom of movement and to enable them to develop independence as they select from wide range of attractive resources. There is ample, clear floor space, which encourages the children to move around freely and teaches them how to negotiate space. The outdoor areas are fully enclosed and well maintained. This keeps the children safe and secure as they play outside. Resources and equipment are plentiful, of good quality and age appropriate. Toys are stored at low level so children can make choices and develop their independence.

Children's safety is well promoted through extensive health and safety assessments completed by Durham University and by the nursery staff. Secure internal and external doors prevent strangers from gaining entry to the nursery rooms and children from leaving unattended. An accurate record is kept of all visitors and procedures are in place to ensure they are not left unsupervised with children. Staff minimise risks to children by taking appropriate steps such as ensuring harmful substances are inaccessible to children and supervising them at all times. Children's awareness of keeping themselves safe is raised through activities such as role play about road safety and by staff giving them explanations about safe practice. They remind them why they shouldn't throw sand and to be careful when using scissors.

Children are well protected. The designated person for child protection is clear about her role and responsibilities for ensuring children are safe. Some staff including the designated person have attended training and all are clear of the procedure to follow should they be concerned about a child in their care. This helps to safeguard their welfare should an incident occur.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. They have developed good relationships with the adults caring for them and approach them confidently and with affection. Staff respond well to the individual needs of each child making sure they follow familiar routines for sleeping and mealtimes so they feel secure. A key worker system is in place. This is used effectively so that children feel equally supported and comfortable if that person is not present. Children are relaxed and confident as they enthusiastically join large or small group activities. They happily move around the nursery rooms choosing from the many resources and activities. Children are becoming skilful communicators. Babies vocalise to gain attention and older children's vocabulary is increasing well as they chat to adults and to their peers.

All children, including the very youngest, delight in sensory exploration and mess making. Materials and resources, such as jelly, finger paints, oats, citrus fruits, sand and water are provided and staff provide appropriate support that gives children to space and emotional security to experiment. They enjoy singing and join in enthusiastically with familiar songs, such as 'Miss Polly has a dolly' and 'The big yellow tractor'.

Most staff are becoming increasingly confident in using 'birth to three' to help them promote the outcomes for children under three; however, there is some inconsistency throughout the nursery for observing, assessing and recording children's progress to help further promote children's play, learning and development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn. As a result, the children are making satisfactory progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. The curriculum is reasonably balanced and covers all learning areas; however, it is not clearly linked to the stepping stones which results in some gaps in the curriculum and occasional lack of challenge for some children. Although observations and assessments are completed these do not clearly inform future planning so staff can be sure that the next steps of children's learning are fully addressed. Staff provide an interesting environment which is organised to help children to be independent. Low storage for resources allows children to make choices and a rolling snack time enables them to choose when they wish to eat and drink.

Children are motivated to learn and able to concentrate well. They are confident to try out new activities such as completing new programmes on the computer. They are sensitive to the needs of others and interact well with each other. For example, when playing in the role play area together and during discussions at group times. Some children are able to write recognisable letters and others are beginning to make marks with meaning. However, opportunities are not provided for them to extend their skills for writing for different purposes in areas other than the mark making area. Children are developing a good understanding of shapes and patterns. They recognise different shapes and patterns through activities such as using the smart board and Rangoli pattern making during Diwali.

Everyday activities, such as counting how many children are in the group or how many children may participate in an activity are not used to further develop children's understanding of numbers. Their knowledge of technology is increasing well as they successfully complete computer programmes using the interactive smart board. Walks in the local area, and trips to places, such as the bus and train stations, Beamish and Hall Hill farm help children to gain a sense of place and of the world in which they live. They enjoy music and participate enthusiastically during weekly sessions with the music teacher and at group times throughout the day. They engage freely and confidently in role play, for example, pretending to be kings and queens and pretending to make picnics.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed into the nursery and their individual needs are well respected. For example, children's dietary requirements are strictly adhered to and children's comforters are on hand if needed. All children have the opportunity to participate in age appropriate activities according to their stages of development to discourage stereotyping. Older children are gaining a developing respect and understanding of other cultures through celebrating different festivals, such as Hanukkah, Diwali, Christmas and birthdays. There are varied resources throughout the nursery to raise children's awareness of diversity, such as posters, books, jigsaws and role play equipment. Children who have learning difficulties and or disabilities are well supported. The nursery staff seek advice and guidance from specialists such as occupational health therapists, physiotherapists and outreach workers to ensure children reach their full potential. Good procedures are in place to support children whose families speak English as an

additional language. Staff ensure that they know a few words in the child's language so they feel welcome and seek advice from a translator if needed. This helps to promote a fully inclusive service. This positive approach means that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Behaviour throughout the nursery is good. Staff gently explain about acceptable behaviour to the children from them being babies, such as teaching them the importance of sharing and of being kind to each other. Staff are positive role models. For example, they say please and thank you to the children and being calm and gentle with them. Children receive lots of praise and smiles to help raise their self-esteem.

Partnership with parents is a strength of the nursery and they are fully involved in all aspects of their child's care. They are invited to take part in forum meetings and their views and suggestions are also sought through questionnaires and a suggestions box. Regular newsletters are produced to keep parents up to date with what is happening in the nursery. A selection of policies are provided for parents in the informative nursery booklet. Most contain the correct information; however, the complaints policy does not have the correct contact address for Ofsted and the lost children policy does not state the procedure that will be followed should a child be lost whilst on an outing. This means parents are not fully informed about these procedures.

The partnership with parents of the children who receive nursery education is also good. They are kept fully informed about their child's achievements and progress and are given information which enables them to consolidate this at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Rigorous and robust procedures are in place for the recruitment and selection of staff. These include an interview, references, a health check and criminal records bureau check and a probationary period to ensure that people caring for children are suitable to do so. Informal arrangements are in place to identify staff's strengths and weaknesses. The manager regularly goes into the nursery rooms and gives verbal feedback on these occasions and also in staff meetings. More formal arrangements for supervision meetings and appraisals are currently being developed in partnership with the university. Staffing levels are high and staff retention is good. The nursery also has consistent supply staff to cover for staff absences. This ensures continuity of care for children. All staff have clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Consequently, the nursery operates efficiently and runs smoothly. Staff are encouraged to attend training with first aid and child protection given priority.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The management team has a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities in developing children's learning and are committed to this. However, the current systems for monitoring the nursery education are not effective enough to identify gaps in children's learning or to ensure that the information gathered from observations and assessments is used to inform future planning.

Detailed policies and procedures which are required for the safe and efficient management of the provision are in place and shared effectively with parents. These are well organised and most contain the relevant information. All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place. The setting works in partnership with Ofsted to ensure all significant changes are notified.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the nursery has reviewed the policies for child protection and behaviour management so these contain all necessary details to safeguard and promote children's welfare. Following the last nursery education inspection the setting has continued to give priority to staff development through training opportunities to develop staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage.

A further recommendation has been made at this inspection regarding the monitoring of the nursery education.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004, 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):

- reduce the risk of cross infection by providing individual bedding for children
- develop consistency throughout nursery for observing, assessing and recording the development of children under three to help inform future practice

- update the complaints policy so this has the correct contact details for Ofsted and extend lost chn on outings.

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):

- extend the opportunities for children to write for a variety of purposes and to increase their confidence of using numbers in everyday activities
- improve planning and assessment and use of observations to ensure appropriate challenge, and to inform the next steps in children's learning
- develop systems for monitoring the nursery education to identify gaps in the curriculum.

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