



Darlington College Childcare Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Registered person	Darlington College
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Darlington College Nursery re-registered in new premises in August 2006. The original nursery was established in the mid eighties and was situated in the old college grounds. It is privately owned by the college and is managed by the principle chief executive and the corporation board. The nursery provides full day care and care during the school holidays for children aged under eight years. Care is offered from seven childcare rooms. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play. The nursery serves staff and students accessing the college and children can attend from surrounding areas. Opening hours are from 08.00 to 18.00 Monday to Thursday, and 08.00 to 17.30 on a Friday. The nursery operates throughout the year, except for bank holidays and Christmas holidays. The facilities are registered to care for 89 children under the age of eight years.

The group is registered with the local education authority to provide funded places for those children of eligible age. There are 16 funded children attending. The nursery supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and there are good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties.

The nursery employs 23 full and part time staff to work with the children. Of which, 21 have suitable qualifications. All full time staff have a Level 3 in Childcare and Education qualification and two members of staff, who are Level 2 at the present time, are working towards Level 3. A qualified cook is employed. They receive support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well protected from infection through highly effective hygiene routines and procedures which are consistently used by the staff throughout the nursery. Staff talk to children frequently about germs and they support children well in gaining a secure understanding of good health and hygiene practices to ensure they stay healthy. For example, children observe good hand washing practices, they are actively encouraged to help themselves to tissues to wipe their own noses, and know they must place their hand over their mouth to prevent the spread of germs when coughing. Older children help staff to wash tables before and after snack time. Children are able to remember when and why they need to wash their hands and the tables before eating. Staff follow good procedures and practices, such as wearing disposable gloves and aprons for nappy changing and ensuring babies and young children have daily fresh linen on their cots. This further promotes high levels of hygiene within the nursery and contributes to minimising the risk of cross-infection.

Children are well taken care of if they have an accident, require medication or become ill, because all staff are trained in first aid, comprehensive documentation fully meets requirements and the sickness policy is well implemented to protect the health of all children attending. Children are able to rest and sleep comfortably as they need to.

Children benefit from a healthy diet and enjoy fresh fruit at snack time. Meals are varied and nutritious and enjoyed by the children. Drinking water is available throughout sessions for children, and children of all ages are able to help themselves from their own drinking cup when they are thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from well organised rooms. Effective use of space and resources means that children have the freedom to explore and play in the safe environment. Resources, furniture and equipment are of very good quality, safe and suitable for the children's use. However, there is no domestic style furniture provided in the babies and under 2s rooms to assist children in developing mobility and to continue normal life experiences. Children can easily access a wide range of toys and materials which are stored so that children can safely access them

without help. They are clearly labelled, helping the children to identify resources and associate print with meaning. There are good systems in place for checking resources and ensuring children are protected from cross-contamination, as rotas show that all toys and equipment are cleaned regularly.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Staff ensure that children are not at risk from unauthorised adults by checking identification and operating a strict signing in and out system for all visitors. The environment is warm and welcoming to children and families. There are attractive displays of children's work and information for parents throughout the nursery. Fire evacuation procedures are displayed and emergency evacuation procedures are practised regularly so that the children know how to get out of the building in an emergency and know where to go to stay safe.

Comprehensive health and safety procedures are implemented effectively by staff who clearly understand their role in keeping children safe. Staff monitor the premises daily and take effective steps to minimise risks so that children are protected from potential hazards. For example, they are unable to access electrical sockets and when toilet floors have been cleaned, children are shown the yellow hazardous sign to remind them that the floor is slippery and they must take care when going to the toilet. However, chairs are used to enable children to reach the interactive white board, this is a potential hazard to young children. All children learn to keep themselves safe both inside the nursery and when on outings, as staff involve them in discussions and teach them safe practice. For example, when walking in the community they learn about road safety and stranger danger; they are encouraged to tidy away toys as they finish with them to keep the areas free from clutter; they line up to go out to play and older children are involved in developing their own out of school rules. Children learn to understand the importance of listening to and following instructions through simple games, such as Simon Says, and they know what to do and where to assemble when they have fire drills.

Children are well protected by staff who have a good knowledge of child protection and a clear understanding of the policies and procedures in place, these are shared with parents. Key staff have attended enhanced child protection training, this knowledge is cascaded through in-house training to other members of staff, which enables all staff to have a clear understanding of their responsibilities within child protection procedures. This contributes to children's welfare being fully safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children benefit from a well planned and exciting range of play opportunities and experiences, this enable them to learn through play. Children enter the nursery enthusiastically and eagerly join in with group activity or choose their own activity. Children enjoy each other's company and chatter to each other and the staff whilst playing harmoniously together, for example, they share and take turns with the buckets and spades in the sand tray. High adult-child interactions help the children's confidence and self-esteem. They achieve very well because staff are highly skilled and use their exceptional understanding of current early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework which is having a positive impact on the quality of provision

for children under three. Staff are confident in using the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, which provides high quality care and education.

The staff plan activities which are resourced, assessed and evaluated effectively on a daily basis.

Staff plan and monitor young children's development effectively, ensuring that they provide sufficient and varied choice. For example, children experiment with gloop, jelly, pasta, and paint with their feet and walk in baked beans. They have introduced a wide variety of treasure baskets, natural resources, and shakers for babies and toddlers to freely explore. Babies and young children show great enthusiasm, excitement and joy as they participate in the varied activities available to them. They enjoy playing together with the activity centres, pushing the buttons and turning the knobs, there is a strong emphasis on cooperation and sharing. Children take turns in the soft play room and are offered lots of praise and cuddles when they have managed to climb over an obstacle. Children demonstrate good physical skills as the youngest children build with construction toys and take great delight in knocking the tower down.

Planning in the out of school club links with the nursery's themes. Children are involved in the planning which includes regular use of the soft play room, outdoor play, baking, creative art and crafts. Children enjoy trips out during the holidays. For example, the cinema, bowling, rough and tumble, discovery museum and the White Scar Caves. Visitors are invited to the club, such as The Zoo lab and the mega smoothie road show.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have a positive attitude and are strongly motivated to learn in an inviting play environment. Staff have knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, which provides a firm foundation for the whole curriculum. Staff plan a wide range of interesting activities which they adapt to include younger children, those with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language. Planning and activities link to the stepping stones and the areas of learning. Interest and investigation tables and role play areas support topics and themes covered and children can visit these areas at their leisure. Written assessments and observations help staff to plan for the next stage in children's learning, however, there is no clear differentiations recorded and although the staff working with the children know their next steps in learning, it is not clearly recorded. This is an area for further development. The staff evaluate children's play and activities on a daily basis, they continually monitor their planning of the curriculum, which ensures they maintain their high standards of care and education.

All children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff enthusiastically on arrival. All children separate well and with confidence from parents and all have formed good relationships with adults and their peers. They are eager to learn and they are able to work on their own and as part of a group taking turns and sharing, for example, when playing in the role play area and when making creative cards for one of the staff's birthday. Children participate in all activities, with a good balance between adult-led and child-led activities, allowing children to choose their own activity independently. All children are happy, confident and enjoy all that they do and are completely engaged at all times. Children display a positive self image and are beginning to develop personal and independence skills, for example, putting

own coats on, using cutlery correctly at lunch time, when going to the toilet, and washing hands before lunch and snack time.

Children learn to predict and investigate and to extend learning about the world. For example, they learn about the seasons, weather and days of the week. They go on nature walks and collect leaves, twigs, flowers and search for insects, which is linked to the investigation table. They use magnifying glasses to see things clearly and read information books to further develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children have good opportunities to access basic information and communication technology and most children confidently use computer programs, older more able children show other children how to complete these programs successfully. Interesting sensory and creative opportunities enable children to experiment and explore shape, colours, textures and sounds in a variety of different mediums.

Children move with confidence and control. They use a wide range of large and small equipment well and climb with confidence. They use simple tools for a purpose and join in first hand experiences, for example, playing in sand and water. They use their imagination well in play, for example, they pretend to be fire officers in the fire and rescue headquarters and use dressing up clothes to be fireman. Children enjoy expressing and exploring their creativity through a variety of media and textures. For example, when children mix their own paint and play with coloured gloop, cold baked beans and clay. Children are able to see their works of art as they all have work displayed on the walls, which creates a bright and welcoming environment with well designed displays and designated use of different areas, which change according to the time of year and areas of learning being explored. Children have good opportunities to experience music and dance and they sing and do actions enthusiastically from a good repertoire of songs.

Children are beginning to use language to compare size and position and older children can correctly name different shapes. For example, they talk about their construction models being bigger, longer or wider. Children demonstrate that they are able to sort, count and sequence during activities and via access to resources during their free play. Staff provide good opportunities and make good use of resources to extend children's progress in mathematical development. For example, numeral wall displays and at snack time they count the number of children at tables and how many pieces of fruit/crackers they can have at one time. Children show an interest in numbers and counting with older children counting reliably to 10 and beyond. They use fingers to represent numbers, for example, counting the chairs and children at snack time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very warmly welcomed into the nursery by staff who greet them by name as they arrive. Children are happy, eager and enthusiastic to join in with the extensive range of activities on offer. They are confident in themselves and have formed excellent relationships with each other and the staff. For example, they have special friends that they like to copy or run errands in pairs with, such as going into the nursery rooms to get the number of children attending lunch and then taking this to the cook. They are very pleased with themselves when they have completed the job successfully. Children with learning difficulties and those who speak English

as an additional language receive excellent support from staff as they work effectively with parents and outside agencies. All staff are pro-active in including all children in activities and play. They fully support and embrace the ethos of inclusion and seek help and guidance where necessary, such as using happy and sad pictures to make sure that children understand right from wrong and displays are labelled in the children's own language.

Children learn about the world around them as staff plan a range of interesting activities raising their awareness of living things and of the lives and festivals of people in other countries. Children participate enthusiastically in a variety of cultural traditions which helps them to develop a positive attitude and respect for others. For example, they make lanterns for Chinese New Year and clay models with candles at Diwali. They learn about different countries, such as Italy, India, Greece, Spain, and Poland, by dressing up and eating food from that country. There are positive images displayed throughout the nursery. Parents participate in the themes and come and talk to the children about other countries and cultures. Visitors to the nursery stimulate their interest. Varied outings help to promote their awareness of their local community. This enables children to develop a positive attitude towards others. Children's self-esteem is fostered well by staff giving them individual attention and encouraging them to be independent in making choices and decisions in planning their own play. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children are extremely well behaved. There are clear boundaries in place that the children respond to. Staff support the children through effective praise and encourage the children in their play and learning. Staff are exceedingly good role models of behaviour and manners, for example, they praise the children consistently for their good manner whilst eating, whilst helping to tidy away, when helping each other with activities and when sharing toys and equipment. Children in the out of school club have developed their own rules and these are proudly displayed. They have awards at the end of the week.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. A superb partnership between the staff and parents ensures that they work together in numerous ways to meet each child's needs. Parents are fully involved in helping to settle their child and get to know all the staff very well. Parents' relationships with staff are relaxed and comfortable, for example, they spend time talking to staff when they arrive at the nursery exchanging vital information to ensure their child is settled before leaving. When collecting their child, some parents stay for some time and watch their child playing and engross themselves in the child's play. This further promotes children's sense of security. Very good and detailed information is provided for parents in newsletters, on the parents noticeboard in the entrance hall, in the corridors between the rooms, displayed on the walls in all the playrooms and in the prospectus. The combination of informal chats, formal written information and open evenings to discuss children's progress, ensures that an excellent level of communication is maintained. Parents contribute to suggestions for the nursery in the letter box provided for this purpose. The provider regularly uses questionnaires to gain feedback from parents and to evaluate their provision. Parents express their approval of the nursery and are able to identify their child's key worker and understand the curriculum which is provided. Comprehensive information about the 'Birth to three' framework and the Foundation Stage is provided for parents. Staff give parents excellent opportunities to be involved in their child's learning at home. For example, parents are made aware of the letter of the week, they are given a jolly phonic packs for home use and information

about how to use the pack to extend their children's learning at home. All policies and procedures can be accessed freely in the entrance and parents are fully informed of who to contact in the event of a complaint.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The exceptional organisation of children's care is significantly enhanced by the manager who is highly motivated and displays an infectious enthusiasm to further develop the quality of the nursery for the children in their care. This positive approach echoes throughout the nursery as staff are happy and confident in their work, this helps children to developed to their full potential in this vibrant environment. The manager uses excellent induction procedures and there are robust and rigorous procedures in place to ensure that staff are vetted, qualified and experienced in childcare and are suitable to work with children. Staff are fully aware of their role within the nursery and they work effectively and efficiently together to promote the smooth running of the nursery. The indoor and outdoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children. Group sizes and staff deployment contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. The key worker systems helps staff to get to know each individual child better and establish positive relationships with their parents. Children receive excellent care through the nursery. Comprehensive, detailed and clear policies and procedures, which are individual to the nursery, are consistently implemented by all staff and fully support the expert practice of knowledgeable and highly skilled practitioners who consistently give utmost priority to protecting all children, promoting their well-being and supporting all to develop their potential. This underpins the success of the nursery.

The documentation is effective, all required policies and procedures are in place and these are supplemented by additional documents which reinforce and ensure the outcomes for children are exceptional. Systems are further enhanced by the in-depth and comprehensive induction programme, good quality supervision and appraisal systems which are conducted on a regular basis to identify training and development needs.

Children's care and education are supported by good leadership and management. The management have robust systems in place to continually and effectively evaluate and monitor staff and their practice, policies and procedures. Information is also gathered from parents to continue making improvements to children's care, teaching and learning. Regular staff meetings are held where information is shared and in-house training is cascaded. This positive approach enables the manager and staff to identify both their strengths and weaknesses. For example, plans to enhance the outdoor play area. The nursery have almost completed the local authority quality assurance scheme with one module out of the 10 yet to be finished. This has enabled the nursery to provide an excellent self assessment for their provision.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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 domestic style furnishings are provided to enable babies to continue normal life experiences and aid them in mobility
- ensure children have safe access to the interactive white board.

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 all activities show the differentiations between children to clearly identify children's next steps in their learning.

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