

# SOUTHDOWNS COLLEGE NURSERY

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110405
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 September 2007
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<b>Registered person</b>	SOUTH DOWN COLLEGE
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

South Downs College Day Nursery has been registered since the mid 1970s and is situated in a purpose built building which includes a secure outside environment. The nursery is based in the grounds of South Downs College in Crookhorn, in Hampshire. The college has overall responsibility for the nursery provision with a nursery manager employed to oversee the day to day running. The nursery caters for the children of college students and staff as a priority and can accept children from the local community. There is a voluntary parent's committee.

The nursery is registered for 67 children from birth to five years. It operates Monday to Thursday 09:00 to 17:15 and Friday from 09:00 to 16:15, term time. Children attend for a variety of full and part-time sessions. Currently there are 75 children on roll, 19 of which are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The provision can support children with learning disabilities and/or difficulties and those who have English as an additional language.

There are 20 practitioners employed to work with the children, 19 of whom hold relevant qualifications in childcare and early years, with one other who is currently working towards NVQ III. The nursery is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and has recently obtained

accreditation status and is registered with Hampshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in this setting where they develop a healthy attitude to physical play and enjoy regular movement and exercise. Practitioners work extremely well to plan and provide a stimulating outdoor environment which includes planting areas, a sensory garden and room for climbing and vigorous physical play on soft safe surfaces. The wonderful outdoor area is well used by children as practitioners are currently promoting its use as much as possible throughout the year to ensure children receive free flow play and learning opportunities between the indoor and outdoor areas of the setting. This contributes to children receiving regular fresh air and exercise as well as increasing their knowledge and understanding of the elements and of experiencing changes in the environment. Children thoroughly enjoy using the fun and stimulating equipment such as climbing up or hiding in the large tractor wheels and using the varied sit and ride cars and prams to negotiate their way well around peers and the outlined pathway. They are also developing a very good sense of space and increased control over their movements. For example, as they enjoy many action songs and rhymes such as Sleeping Bunnies and delight in following simple instructions as they tiptoe, take giant steps, jump up high and curl up small. Following on from vigorous play practitioners are highly skilled as they help children learn the effect exercise has on their body as they feel their heart beating faster which helps them learn the importance of exercise for their own good health.

Children's care is exceptionally well met as all personal requirements, routines and stages of development are recorded on the registration form and discussed with parents prior to attendance. This ensures that any specific health and dietary needs are identified and addressed for the child's good health and well-being. Excellent procedures are in place to share information within the team to ensure practitioners working with specific children are well informed and practitioners are highly active in seeking additional training or advice from the college nurse to ensure best possible care for individual children. All practitioners are first aid trained and first aid boxes are well maintained and easily accessible in the setting, therefore, children benefit from all practitioners being fully aware and able to deal with accidents and ill health effectively and efficiently.

Children are protected from illness and cross infection because practitioners have stringent routines in place to ensure an exceptionally well maintained and clean environment. Practitioners use aprons and disposable gloves for changing nappies and are vigilant in promoting high levels of cleanliness throughout the environment. For example, ensuring all play resources and equipment for babies is sterilised after use and regular deep cleanse procedures occurring throughout the setting. Children are very well protected from the spread of infection as parents are fully informed of any infectious illnesses occurring in the setting and have a comprehensive guideline displayed and also included in the prospectus informing them of exclusion periods due to ill health. Children learn about personal hygiene as practitioners are highly skilled at promoting regular hand washing routines and discussions about the importance of cleanliness and maintaining a clean environment for their good health.

Children receive a wealth of input about healthy eating at the setting as this is exceptionally well promoted by practitioners through discussion in natural free play, daily routines and

planned themes. They are fully included in the preparation of healthy snacks and enjoy chopping up fruit, making their own sandwiches and pouring drink which promotes fine motor skills and independence. Children have a lovely healthy lunch consisting of finger foods such as a selection of pita and wholemeal bread, cream crackers, cooked meat, grated cheese, cucumber, carrots, peppers and tomatoes. Lunchtime is a relaxed social occasion and children benefit from self-service of their own foods which has a positive impact on what they choose and do eat. All children have access to fresh water throughout the session which they can access independently, either from water jugs to decanter or bottles and cups for babies and younger children. As a result children are well hydrated which helps to maintain concentration and good health.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a wonderful purpose built nursery unit which provides a bright, attractive and welcoming environment. They can play and learn in comfort and ease as the setting has all the required facilities to support their individual needs. Children benefit from substantially well resourced rooms which are extremely well organised. Storage of play resources provides free and easy access for children, therefore, enabling them to make choices and initiate their own play developing responsibility and independence.

Children are kept safe and secure at all times as practitioners have highly effective procedures in place. For example, meticulous risk assessment is undertaken in each area on a daily basis to ensure the facility is safe for children and specific alarms indicate concerns both within the setting or on the college campus. The nursery also has a panic button facility which alerts security and triggers an immediate closure of the main gates. As a result all play areas, equipment and resources are safe for use and, access and children are kept secure and are protected. Children are also kept secure because access to the premises is personally monitored through the reception and practitioners have effective procedures for the collection of children with passwords used for alternative arrangements. Evacuation of the premises is practised on a half term basis and the setting has an evacuation cot to ensure swift and safe exit for babies and young children from the setting in the event of an emergency.

Children benefit from having equipment and play resources that are in excellent condition and highly appropriate for their stage of development. They are also supported exceedingly well as practitioners are deployed effectively and operate higher than National Standard ratios, resulting in excellent levels of supervision of children and quality care and further contributing to safety.

Children's welfare is high priority and practitioners have comprehensive knowledge and understanding of child protection with effective systems in place to ensure concerns are recorded and reported to the required agencies. Consequently, practitioners are clear in their role and responsibility to safeguard children.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children throughout the setting benefit from exceptional input and high quality care from a team of fully qualified, highly motivated and enthusiastic practitioners who have an excellent understanding of the development, care and learning needs of children. Practitioners' strive to know the children well in their care to ensure they can provide effectively for their individual

needs and daily routines. Children benefit from a key worker system which promotes close observation ensuring all children are substantially challenged to promote enjoyment and achievement.

Babies and young children are significantly well supported, happy and settled as they develop warm and trusting relationships with practitioners. They are becoming competent and imaginative learners as they make use of the wealth of stimulating activities and play provision to enhance their early learning. Practitioners have excellent knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and link this effectively to the Foundation Stage of learning. They plan and provide fun activities and a vibrant, stimulating environment to help children with their next steps of learning and development. For example, as babies explore their senses using heuristic baskets, reflective paper and 'Gloop' or are encouraged to crawl and take tentative steps through practitioners' warm reassurance and encouragement. Their communication is developing very well as babies and young children are effectively stimulated through practitioners' excellent interpersonal skills as they make good eye contact and engage in consistent verbal and visual interaction.

### Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Practitioners have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage for children's learning and are accomplished at using the stepping stones to provide a balanced curriculum. They plan as a team which ensures all are clear on required outcomes for individual children and charts around the setting clearly identify current levels and prompts for further development. Continual observation and update ensures records of achievement are fully maintained enabling practitioners to actively plan for children's next steps in learning. All activities are evaluated for success and improvement which contributes to children receiving stimulating experiences and fun, purposeful activities. Practitioners are highly skilled at providing a wonderful learning environment for children where they are actively encouraged to explore their independence, for example, planning is flexible and children are asked for their contributions which enables practitioners to feed their interests. Children are also gaining excellent skills at problem solving as practitioners use highly effectively questioning to help them think and work things out independently. Children flourish as they are truly interested and respond well to the effective teaching methods used, to practitioners' exceptional interpersonal skills, their energy and enthusiasm and commitment to high standards.

Children's personal and social development is very well promoted as they are highly regarded and valued as an individual which has a positive impact on their self esteem. They benefit immensely from the environment and practitioners who continually promote independence during natural free play and daily routines. For example, as they self serve and prepare snacks or as they initiate their own play and contribute to the planning of activities. Children are very happy within the setting and their behaviour is generally excellent with any small issues being calmly addressed in a positive manner to help children learn and explore better methods to deal with conflict. Children thrive on the abundance of praise they receive regardless of how minor the effort which fosters a willingness to achieve and boosts confidence. They develop their social skills through working together with their peers as they, for example, learn to share and take turns with equipment in the garden or as they help each other at tidy up time. They build warm trusting relationships with practitioners and respond extremely well to the high level of individual support, time and attention they receive.

Children have excellent resources and learning opportunities to develop skills in communication, language and literacy as there are well resourced areas within the setting that encourage

independent use of books and mark making. Children's listening skills are developing very well and they truly enjoy stories where the practitioners include them, encouraging participation and to predict, which promotes their thinking and learning. Children begin to foster an enjoyment of books as they are able to join the campus library and borrow a book, visit the mobile library or on an outing to Leigh Park library. Their self registration, jolly phonic rhymes and recording sounds all contribute to children recognising letters and linking sounds and the use of picture prompts also reassures children of the routine of the day. Children have excellent opportunities to extend their mathematical understanding as counting, calculation, shape and measure are seamlessly included into everyday routines and natural play. For example, as children make two lines they are asked to count the number of boys and girls, and then discuss more or less and how many; or at the water play when they explore filling and pouring with containers and learn about capacity. Once again practitioners are highly skilled at making every experience a positive learning opportunity.

Children's learning is unmistakably very well fostered as they experience some innovative activities that extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, as they take a book they have made to the reprographic department on campus where they observe it being laminated and spiral bound or as they visit the animal management area to see and learn about the care of reptiles and animals. Overall children experience an exciting range of innovative and developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities which provide optimal challenge. Practitioners' excellent knowledge and understanding of how children learn and, their imagination and enthusiasm has a positive impact on how children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals in all areas.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children have excellent opportunities at the setting to develop a strong sense of them-self, becoming confident and self assured as they are unmistakably valued as individuals. Their input is always appreciated and practitioners take time and utmost consideration for all children ensuring they are always included and involved. Children's own work is promoted and displayed prominently so they can see how their contributions are valued. They benefit from an environment of inclusion where any additional needs are investigated to ensure the child has the best possible care. Children become aware of a wider society and develop great self-esteem and respect for others as practitioners provide a very good selection of resources that portray positive images of diversity; and, through topics and general discussion of celebrations and events. All children are always fully included in the life of the setting.

Children thrive in this setting on the abundance of praise and encouragement they receive. Their behaviour is generally excellent and any small issues are immediately addressed with the minimum of fuss in a manner which enables children to learn to deal with conflict in a none threatening, more harmonious way. Children love the opportunity for having responsibility or a special job and take great delight in carrying out the task. Good manners are encouraged at all times and practitioners are excellent role models. Positive methods such as awarding stickers for all children for their effort or achievement helps them feel valued and develop self esteem. Throughout the setting practitioners display excellent interaction with children and provide an interesting and stimulating environment, this ensures children are always occupied and which also has a positive impact on behaviour. Children benefit from practitioners being skilled and sensitive in their management of children. All methods are positive and appropriate for their level of understanding. Parents are informed of any behaviour concerns immediately and

versatile systems are put in place to ensure partnership with parents and consistency of practice for children. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents are fully informed of children's progress and achievements as they are invited to meet with their child's key worker every half term. They are also able to take home children's records to ensure they are fully aware of their child's levels. Their views and contributions are welcome, so that practitioners can build on what children can do. Effective systems are in place to ensure parents are aware of current themes and can be included in children's learning at home, as notices and plans are effectively displayed and newsletters are issued every term. Parents are made very welcome into the setting to share any interest or expertise such as playing musical instruments or a family event. Family liaison books ensure excellent channels of communication are established and key workers are very happy to make time to discuss any issues with parents whenever required. Introductory visits are offered two weeks before the start of the new college year to enable parents to attend and settle children effectively. Parents have a comprehensive prospectus outlining all aspects of the setting, working practices and policies to ensure they are fully informed. Questionnaires issued every term and suggestion boxes actively seek parents' views on the service they and their children receive, which enables practitioners to review their service and continue to build on existing outstanding practice. Parents interviewed on inspection are extremely happy with the high standard of care and education their children receive and have high regard for the practitioners and the setting.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Leadership and management is outstanding. Children are making rapid progress in their learning and development because the manager has a clear vision for the nursery education with a strong focus on the personal development and achievements of children. She ensures practitioners provide a vibrant, stimulating environment which is wonderfully organised for children's use and enjoyment. She works hands-on within the preschool providing an excellent role model to her peers, full of motivation and total enthusiasm for her work with children. As a result she is able to effectively monitor performance and evaluate the curriculum. Practitioners benefit from clear direction, are secure in their roles and responsibilities and have an excellent working knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They work highly effectively as a team which contributes to positive outcomes for children. Management's commitment to offering an outstanding service and continual improvement is evidenced through recently achieving accreditation with the Preschool Learning Alliance, regular self evaluation and requests for various means of feedback from parents and children through, for example, suggestion boxes and questionnaires.

Organisation of the nursery overall is outstanding which has a significant impact on the quality of children's care. The management structure provides excellent direction and supports the team effectively. Additional responsibilities are delegated within the team such as child protection, special educational needs and behaviour management which contributes to the smooth running of the setting and practitioners being valued and developing their expertise. An excellent ratio of practitioners that are fully qualified ensures children are cared for by professionals who have a very good understanding of development and care needs. Practitioners attend regular training to further enhance their professionalism and expertise and to keep abreast with changes and initiatives within early years. Robust recruitment and vetting, deployment of staff and high ratios contribute to excellent levels of safety and a quality child care service. Children's safety is also maintained as they are never left unsupervised with persons who have not been vetted and all aspects of their care and individual needs are meticulously

addressed, monitored and shared with parents'. All required documents, policies and procedures are in place and maintained to a high standard. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

At the last care inspection the provider was recommended to ensure that the behaviour management and incident records show clearly the steps taken by staff; that children in the one to three year age group have a varied range of snacks and that they also follow effective hand washing routines. Behaviour management records now include positive steps taken by practitioners and younger children now have a new sink fitted in the room to enable good personal hygiene procedures. They also enjoy varied healthy snacks such as fresh fruits and savoury biscuits such as breadsticks. These improvements have a positive impact on partnership with parents, behaviour management and children's good health.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to enhance the high quality provision even further by consistently including learning outcomes in the weekly planning, relating to the stepping stones, which can be evaluated and inform staff and parents. To enhance the resources for outdoor play, providing more challenge in climbing activities and extend opportunities for children to use their senses in the outdoor environment. Charts around the setting clearly outline learning outcomes for children and are an excellent means of quickly and efficiently recording children's progress and identifying next steps. Outdoor resources have been extended and now include large tractor tyres to climb up and a sensory garden and the setting has introduced more free flow use of the outdoor area. These improvements have a positive impact on children's gross motor skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world and are extremely beneficial to children who may suffer impairment of sight.

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

Since the last inspection 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.



## **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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