

Gosforth Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 206771

Inspection date 09 October 2007

Inspector Tara Street

Setting Address Gosforth Youth Centre, Stubley Lane, Dronfield Woodhouse, Dronfield,
Derbyshire, S18 8YN

Telephone number 01246 415005

E-mail

Registered person Gosforth Pre-School

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Sessional 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?

Gosforth Pre-school was first registered in 1977. It operates from Derbyshire County Council Youth Club premises situated in Dronfield Woodhouse and serves children from the local and surrounding areas. Children attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday in term time between 09:15 and 11:45 for two-year-old children and 09:15 and 12:15 for funded children. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are 31 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and the sessions are led by a regular team of seven staff. Of these, four staff hold relevant childcare qualifications and another two are working towards a qualification. The provision is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and is supported by the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted very effectively. There are very good procedures in place to help children learn about their personal hygiene through daily routines. For example, children use the toilet independently and know it is important to wash their hands before snack time, after toileting and messy activities. Their understanding of maintaining healthy practices is supported by the staff who offer timely reminders and role model good practice. For example, staff encourage children to dispense their own soap and dispose of their paper towels hygienically. Premises are clean and well maintained. Staff follow effective and detailed procedures when dealing with accidents and medication and they hold relevant first aid certificates. All written permissions are obtained from parents for the safe administration of medication and a detailed health care plan is completed to ensure appropriate care is offered at all times. Any minor accidents are treated and recorded appropriately with parental signatures as acknowledgement of being informed. A thorough policy is shared with parents for the care of children who are ill or have infections. This ensures children are protected from cross-infection and helps them to remain healthy. Written permission is obtained from parents for staff to seek any emergency medical advice or treatment.

Children benefit from the opportunity to try a variety of foods at snack time. Each week they are offered a different snack, sometimes related to a time of year or topic being covered. This is often a small selection of raw fruits or vegetables. Children's awareness of healthy eating is effectively promoted as children have regular opportunities to help prepare and taste a range of different foods. For example, they make their own soups with vegetables they have planted and picked from the garden, create fruit kebabs or make their own sandwiches. Their individual dietary needs and requirements are well catered for as staff are pro-active in ensuring their needs are met. They record information from parents about children's dietary requirements and work with them to ensure diets are adhered to. The weekly menu is displayed so that parents know what their children are being offered. Children enjoy a café style snack time and sit in small family groups, making this a pleasant and social occasion. Most children are supported to pour their own choice of drinks and develop independence as they wash their own plates and cups after eating.

Children's physical development is promoted well. They have many opportunities to play outside with a very good range of equipment to help the development of their physical skills. For example, children eagerly walk across a balance beam, jump on the trampoline and practise throwing skills with balls and bean bags. Inside children enjoy moving to music, participating in ring games and playing games with the parachute. They enjoy these activities which enable them to move in a variety of ways and help develop their physical skills. Resources are used well to offer variety and challenge to children such as hoops, large building blocks, ribbons and tunnels. Children enjoy helping to set up obstacle courses and playing group games. Children are well protected from the effects of the sun during the summer and their awareness is raised. Staff ensure the children wear sun hats when playing outside and ask parents to apply sun cream before leaving their children on hot days.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given high priority. Staff make daily checks on the environment as they set up each day and report any concerns promptly so that they are addressed. Children benefit from warm and welcoming premises where the rooms are decorated attractively to stimulate their learning. They have access to a wide range of appropriate toys and resources that meet their developmental needs, are clean and safe to use. Children move around the room easily, accessing activities independently. Security, particularly as children arrive and depart, is carefully maintained. Children are constantly under the staff's supervision. Thorough risk assessments are completed daily through staff checking toys and equipment and recording any action they have taken. However, the safety and well-being of children and staff is not fully promoted in relation to the hand washing routines, staff are aware of this issue and are working hard to find a solution.

Good arrangements are in place to protect children in the event of a fire. Staff are vigilant to keep all exits clear of furniture and activities. The emergency escape plan is regularly rehearsed with the children and an evaluation is carried out, which records which children are present and any issues that arise. Children learn the importance of keeping safe as staff talk to them about safety both indoors and outside. For example, they talk about road safety before going out on walks into the local community, the importance of staying together and understand why they must not run indoors in case they fall and hurt themselves. They also enjoy visits from the fire service who reinforce all important fire safety messages. Children know the rules and boundaries and follow routines very well. A clear policy and procedure is in place and understood by all staff in the event of any children being lost or uncollected.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a good knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities with regard to child protection procedures and have undertaken appropriate training. They are fully aware of possible signs and symptoms of children who may be at risk and of their responsibility to ensure the designated person is informed of any concerns. There is a comprehensive child protection statement, which meets the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and is made available for parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs and their welfare is highly promoted. Children are enthusiastically involved, interested and stimulated in the extensive range of age-appropriate toys and resources such as puzzles, construction, junk modelling and gardening activities, which are very well planned. Staff take children's individual learning into account by presenting appropriate challenges to increase knowledge and understanding. Staff interact with children very well. They show interest in children's comments and achievements, ask them stage-appropriate questions and offer lots of praise and encouragement. For example, staff thank children for helping in tasks such as helping put toys away before group time. Children develop appropriate socialisation skills as they look out for and assist one another. For example, children help each other to find play food in the role play area when pretending to make breakfast and show other children how to use the diggers in the sand pit. Children freely move from one play area to another and are spontaneous in their play and interactions with other children and adults. They take turns on the computer and enthusiastically wash their cups and plates after snack. Staff generally encourage children to be independent, promoting their self-esteem and confidence. Good opportunities are provided for children to relax and have quiet times. There is a well

presented and comfortable story corner for children to sit and look at books independently and listen to stories. Children enjoy stories read by enthusiastic staff who make them fun for children. The large outdoor play area is popular with the children as there are many play opportunities for them.

Staff have a sound understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use this to successfully plan activities for young children. They are very knowledgeable about the objectives and record them clearly in a weekly planning sheet. Accurate records are maintained because staff complete thorough observations which show children's progress through early milestones and effectively plan for their next steps in learning, therefore, younger children's development and skills are very well supported and promoted. However, the identified next steps in learning are not currently recorded on their individual development records to show this progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a thorough understanding of the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones which enables them to plan effective activities and experiences that are well matched to children's needs and interests. For example, new homes are currently being built next to the pre-school and the children are very interested in watching the workmen, cement trucks and diggers. As a result staff have adapted their planning to incorporate a wide range of activities based around building, effectively enhancing children's interest and enjoyment. Relationships are very good. Staff know the children well and their teaching motivates the children, so they are keen to learn and make good progress. This is further promoted through a highly effective key worker system, which ensures children's individual learning needs are identified and promoted. Written observations made by the staff means they are able to plan effectively and ensure children are appropriately challenged according to their stage of development. All staff are included in the planning process, putting their ideas and suggestions forward. They make effective use of time and resources and use their monitoring procedures very well to evaluate the quality of their teaching. They have an excellent understanding of behaviour management using a quiet, calm and sensitive approach in which they use reasoning and explanation.

Children are interested and motivated to learn as they actively engage in a full range of activities. They share and take turns and are confident to try new experiences. During group time the children sit quietly as they show an interest in what others have to say. For example, children eagerly discuss emotions and take turns to talk about the activities that make them feel happy, sad, angry or embarrassed such as 'I feel happy when my daddy tickles with me'. They form good relationships with their peers, staff and student helpers caring for them, approaching staff with confidence and freely talking about their interests. Children are developing their independence as they select what they wish to do, use the bathroom independently and choose when to have snack. However, some opportunities for children to develop their self-reliance and independence skills are not consistently provided.

Children are confident as they freely access a good supply of writing materials and resources which enable them to practise their early writing skills. For example, children confidently use hole punch's, scissors and a variety of pens to mark-make, which develops their pencil control and hand to eye co-ordination skills. Through well displayed written words and their use of books, children are developing a good understanding of words and their meaning. Children's emerging writing skills are highly valued and supported by the staff who adapt activities to enable children to work at their own level. For example, children are supported to use a range

of labels and name cards to begin to copy or trace letters and staff promote this well because they discuss the letters and sounds each one makes as they write. Through finding their own name cards as they arrive at the setting and at snack time, the children are beginning to recognise their own names. However, children are not consistently challenged to use these to recognise the letters in their name and often identify the correct card through the colour or picture instead. Children enjoy stories, songs and rhymes. Children become actively involved during group time and eagerly participate in action songs such as 'Old MacDonald had a farm' and confidently use the appropriate Makaton sign for each of the animals named.

Children's mathematical development is progressing well through a varied programme of planned and spontaneous activities. Children count with growing confidence and are beginning to understand a range of mathematical concepts. They enjoy playing maths games and confidently use maths counting blocks to match and sort different lengths into size order, discussing the shortest and longest and solve problems by adding or subtracting units to make them fit the appropriate space. Children are supported to use a good range of number labels around the room to recognise and name number symbols. They eagerly help staff to sort a number line into the correct order before helping to put it on the wall, developing their understanding of number sequence. Staff plan and provide a good range of activities which provide children with opportunities to explore and investigate their environment using their senses. Children take part in activities to learn about living things and show curiosity when bug hunting. They take great interest in using magnifying pots to examine the insects they have collected, including woodlice, slugs and worms and enjoy drawing pictures of their finds before gently releasing them back into the garden. Children tend to vegetables and flowers they have planted from seed, weeding and watering as necessary and take great pride in helping to care for their garden by recycling waste. Their knowledge and understanding of the world around them is further enhanced through their involvement in topics which look at different celebrations and cultures from around the world. The setting goes out of its way to utilise the resources available in the local community and has built strong links with local schools and businesses. Their technology skills are enhanced as they experience a wide range of opportunities to use computer programmes to develop mouse control and have regular access to calculators, play telephones and a range of battery operated toys and resources.

Physical and creative development is effectively promoted. Children enjoy a full and varied programme of activities which promote these areas. They enjoy independent access to a range of painting and drawing activities, modelling and use a range of tools for mark-making, cutting and sticking. They explore colour, shape and form in both two and three dimensions as they build mobiles from leaves and twigs from the garden. They confidently use scissors, pencils and different sized paint brushes which help to develop their control and co-ordination of small tools. They move with confidence and show a good awareness of space. For example, when participating in music and movement activities they hold their arms out to ensure they will not hit anyone else when they move their bodies. Children enjoy a range of physical movement sessions such as pretending to move through the long wavy grass or thick oozy mud when reading 'we're going on a bear hunt' and using equipment to play group games which develops their balance and co-ordination skills. Children are fully supported to develop their potential and activities are adapted to ensure all can participate and experience success.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other. They begin to feel a sense of belonging in the group as their opinions are sought and valued. Increased support is available

for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff work effectively with parents and outside agencies to ensure their needs are met appropriately. They are highly successful in assessing children's individual needs and successfully adapt activities to offer suitable levels of challenge without identifying children.

Children are developing an understanding of how everyone positively contributes in society as the staff effectively promote inclusion. Resources, language and carefully planned activities assist learning. Children access a versatile range of resources that reflect diversity such as small world toys, books, puzzles and role play equipment that depicts positive images of age, gender, ability and culture. They learn about the wider community through a wide range of visitors such as mid-wife, police and park ranger. This is also promoted through participation in local events such as Dronfield in Bloom and Dronfield Well-Dressing. Their knowledge and experiences are successfully extended as craft activities linked to culture and festivals are included. Topics have aspects to develop an awareness of the environment, tidying up and taking care of others. This ensures children develop a strong sense of independence and self-worth as they are encouraged to share, take turns and listen to others. All are well behaved as they accept and respond to the firm and consistent expectations of the staff. Children are very confident in the setting and show a sense of belonging to a wider group. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents and carers receive detailed and informative information about the services provided and how their child will be cared for. They receive a detailed prospectus which includes the settings' aims and objectives, the 'Birth to three matters' framework and a full copy of the settings' policies and procedures. A comprehensive settling-in procedure is in place, which is adaptable to ensure the needs of new children and parents are catered for. Parents are asked to complete a 'child profile' form, which records their likes, dislikes, interests and achievements so far. Information regarding activities and topics the children will be engaged in is provided through a comprehensive information letter which includes activity suggestions for parents to carry out at home. The ongoing sharing of information ensures continuity of care and any changes to children's circumstances can be addressed immediately. There is an informative notice board and parents receive regular information about forthcoming events and activities. Parents and carers are very happy with the provision; they highlight their delight with the friendly, professional, approachable staff.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early years is outstanding. They are well informed about the Foundation Stage for nursery education through comprehensive information, which informs them about the care and education provided. They are kept informed about their child's progress through daily exchange of information with their child's key worker and by invitation to more formal meetings with staff to discuss their child's progress through the stepping stones. Each child has their own development file that parents have access to, which includes photographic and pictorial evidence of their achievements, and are actively encouraged to participate in monitoring their child's progress. This partnership is further developed as parents are encouraged to be involved in supporting their child's learning through a weekly 'reading together' scheme and three language and mathematics activity bags. Children very much enjoy taking these bags home and sharing the activities and stories with their families. This helps to build strong links between learning at home and in the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are very relaxed and self-motivated in a well-organised and inspiring environment. They are very confident to initiate and progress their own play, relishing their time in the group. The setting has good systems in place to support their working practices and promote the children's care and well-being. Comprehensive policies support consistent and professional practice. Staff share and receive information with parents regularly, maintaining clear records in a professional and systematic manner to ensure they are up to date. All documentation is in place and supports the good quality practice.

Children are in the care of qualified and experienced staff who support them well to ensure they are happy and settled in the setting. High staff ratios are maintained to ensure children's individual and specific needs are met. Thorough organisation of effectively planned routines and developmentally appropriate activities, which the children are eager to engage in, ensures children's time in the setting is worthwhile and challenging. Regular staff meetings and a positive attitude to training ensures children receive care from motivated and informed adults.

Leadership and management of early education is good. The committee and manager have a clear and forward thinking vision for the setting and the education that it provides. They plan effectively to maintain the quality of provision through staff training, resources and keeping up to date with changes to the curriculum. The manager is very pro-active in her approach and has an excellent knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and is able to support and monitor the provision being delivered by staff. She works alongside the established staff team who are deployed extremely well to ensure children have very good support. Comprehensive and flexible planning systems allow children to make extensive choices about their play and learning. The manager spends quality time observing the delivery of the curriculum, evaluating the outcomes for children and implements effective action plans to address any identified areas. Annual appraisals for all staff ensure they maintain and update their professional skills and attitudes through training such as developing a new ECO school. Management and staff are extremely well motivated, innovative and committed to ensuring children's learning experience is inspiring and fun. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care and early education inspection a recommendation was raised in relation to; ensuring children have more frequent routine opportunities to access communication technology and programmable toys. Children have access to a computer and a wide range of battery operated and programmable toys which are regularly put out for children to use both within planned and spontaneous play. This effectively develops their knowledge and understanding of communication technology.

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 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):

- take positive steps to promote the safety of both children and staff, in relation to hand washing routines
- ensure children's identified next steps in learning are recorded on their individual development records

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure opportunities for children to develop their self-reliance and independence skills are consistently provided (also applies to care)
- provide more challenges enabling children to begin to recognise their own names.

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