

Derwent Valley Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400288
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Inspector	Elizabeth Patricia Edmond
Setting Address	The Village Hall, Main Street, Hutton Buscel, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO13 9LR
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Registered person	Derwent Valley Pre-School Committee
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?

Derwent Valley Playgroup is a voluntary, committee run pre-school provision. The group operates in the village hall in Hutton Buscel, which is just off the A170 near West Ayton, to the west of Scarborough. The group have the use of the large hall in the community building. There is also an enclosed garden area for outdoor play and learning. Established in 1968 and registered since 1992, it serves mainly the immediate locality including the nearby villages of East and West Ayton and the surrounding rural area. Opening hours are from 9.15 to 12.00 Monday to Friday, term time only. An associated toddler group runs on Mondays from 13.00 to 15.00.

The group is registered to provide funded nursery education places for those children of eligible age. For this they have the regular support of the local authority. Of the 21 children currently on roll, eight children are in receipt of such funding. The committee employs four staff to work with the children, the majority of whom have appropriate qualifications and experience. The group also welcomes parental support.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn to lead a healthy lifestyle and are well supported in this by staff. Regular projects and activities on 'food' mean that children know that milk and vegetables are good for them and they know where their food comes from. Children enjoy the healthy snacks provided by pre-school. They chat happily as they sample the cheese rolls, fresh fruit or rice cakes. Children can help themselves to the water cooler as they play.

There is good range of opportunities for physical play and children develop a positive attitude to being active outdoors. They often choose to take their role play outdoors and they develop their physical skills and strength as they pedal the tricycles as part of a pretend journey to the shops. The adjacent grassed area is also well used in better weather. Children are able to develop their climbing and balancing skills. They also have great fun as they join in with parachute games or movement games on the carpet and they exuberantly march indoors and out with the musical instruments.

Clear health and hygiene policies are followed fully by staff at all times and children learn to manage their personal hygiene independently. Children know to wash their hands after using the toilet and they learn why they have to rub the anti-bacterial gel on their hands before snack.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children can play freely because staff arrive early each day to make sure that the village hall is safe for the children and as child friendly as possible. Children learn to keep themselves safe because the staff explain clearly to them in ways that they can understand about why they should not run indoors. Children's very good behaviour is also an asset because they learn to follow these suggestions.

There is a broad range of play equipment which the children can choose from freely to meet their learning needs and keep them interested. Staff further increase the opportunities for children by rotating the equipment regularly and they check that all the resources are in good safe condition.

Children are protected and their wellbeing effectively safeguarded. Experienced staff are able manage concerns in a highly professional manner and they continue to update their training at various levels. All national and local guidance is kept for advice, should it be needed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily at pre-school and run joyously to greet the staff. They develop a sense of security in the regular routines. They confidently post their cards to register that they are present and they assemble themselves quickly for group time. Children soon find something that interests them and they remain motivated and engaged throughout the morning and they often express their contentment by singing exuberantly or humming quietly as they play and learn. This means that they enjoy their developing natural curiosity as learners.

Children develop excellent speaking and listening skills due to the staff's vigilant yet sensitive approach to engaging the children in conversation. Importantly, staff give children time to talk and they are very patient when children sometimes take time to find the right words. Children learn to listen carefully at the short, well planned group time because staff are skilled in helping them to complete the calendar and pitch story or singing activities at the right level for them.

Children are often very creative. They enjoy using various paint and craft techniques freely and they spend their time purposefully, exploring the equipment and materials. Staff achieve an effective balance of supporting the children, by encouraging them to explore what is available whilst not hindering the children's self expression in their work. Staff celebrate the children's creativity. Consequently, children are proud of what they have produced, particularly when they are featured on the gallery board as the 'artist of the week.' Children are also very creative in their role play. Younger children confidently act out familiar experiences in the home corner. More able children add more complex story lines and often take the game outdoors to use the tricycles to enhance the game.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff skilfully support children's learning by using informal conversational questioning techniques to engage the children, to help them to think and to move them on in their learning. For example, staff are proactive in encouraging the children to think about how many play dough cakes they have made, or how many scoops of sand they need or to suggest how a piece of jigsaw might be turned around. This effective approach means that children can explain in great detail about the computer game they are playing or how to turn the magnetic blocks around if they will not stick together. Planning systems show clear links to the Foundation Stage and demonstrate that the whole of the curriculum is offered to the children. Systems also identify children's individual learning and are used well to inform the children's individual learning plans for that term.

Staff place a firm emphasis on the children's mathematical development. There is very good range of related equipment and activities. Consequently children learn to count very well and they recognise familiar numerals, for example, as they help the staff to complete the calendar each day. Children demonstrate their developing understanding about addition and subtraction as they act out songs such as 'Five Currant Buns.' More able children correctly work out how many buns are left after one or more have been bought. Children use mathematical language confidently to talk about their large and small constructions and they understand concepts such as 'opposite' when talking about size.

Children enjoy books and they handle them very well. Sometimes they access the book corner alone and spend time turning the pages correctly and perusing the pictures. They also enjoy snuggling with an adult to share a favourite book. Children begin to learn about letters and the sounds they make, for example, they know that the day is Monday when an adults hints that the day starts with 'M'.

Visits to nearby farms and well planned projects have meant that children are very knowledgeable about the world around them and where their food comes from. Children use the larger and smaller construction kits increasing skill and they use simple tools to shape and mark the play dough. Children enjoy using the computer to reinforce their learning in other areas. They competently negotiate between the screens and work well together to find particular characters or match the shapes. Children learn how to use different programs to create their own pictures and more able children recognise the written prompts so that they can print their picture.

Children's confidence in their creativity is an asset to their learning in all other areas. Their exuberant approach to using the musical instruments, the art equipment and the small world and role play equipment means that children become very motivated independent learners. Having engaged with the activities, they often remain deeply involved, concentrating for some time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff get to know the children and their families very well and the warm trusting relationships are a key factor in the children's happiness and success. The staff are genuinely proud of the children's achievements and they delight in the children's developing personalities. Consequently, the children feel valued and truly respected as individuals. This approach also means that children with learning difficulties and disabilities are also sensitively and actively included in all activities. There is a good range of resources and activities which promote equality of opportunity. Children demonstrate their acceptance of being part of a diverse community by playing happily, for example, with the play-people and taking part in activities around various festivals.

Staff sensitively help the younger children to take responsibility for their actions which means that older children happily help to tidy up and are able to share and take turns with the minimum of adult support. The exceptional approach to managing behaviour means that children are proud of the warm praise and encouragement they receive for their efforts and their behaviour, are confident, motivated and well behaved. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good and relationships are very positive. The settling-in policy works well in practice which means that the young children develop effective three-way relationships with the staff and their parents. This further promotes the happy atmosphere and the children's relaxed behaviour, as the adults chat about care routines or business arrangements. Children's attendance at the toddler group in the same premises also helps them to settle quickly when they start attend without their parents. There is clear information for parents about general nursery operational business in the form of notices, policies and newsletters. Parents' free access to children's portfolios means that they are well informed about their children's learning and level of development. Parents are welcomed warmly into the pre-school and their involvement at all levels is appreciated. Some parents enjoy helping out at play sessions and sharing their skills and backgrounds such as cooking or farming with the children. This further strengthens relationships and provides additional opportunities for the children such as feeding a lamb or making pizzas. Parents are pleased with the new link book showing observations and photographs of their children's development. However, staff have not yet established how this system might be used in true partnership with parents to fully maximise learning and development for the children. Parents are very happy with the wonderfully friendly environment at the pre-school and many travel some distance to bring their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The well established, mature and stable staff team work competently together to support children's care and learning needs. This provides children and families with a high level of continuity. Staff have a positive approach

to their professional development. They have attended many training courses over the years and continue to update their skills and knowledge. The high adult-child ratio is also a positive feature of the pre-school. There is often one adult to three children. This supports the children's needs very well, particularly when children need additional support.

Staff are proactive in evaluating the provision and devising ways of improving the care and education for the children. They work very well with the local education authority advisor on various areas of development. A significant area of development has been in the very recent introduction of a home-link book showing clear observations of the children. Staff are beginning to use the detailed observations as a means of assessing the children's level of development and to identify the children's interests and preferred learning styles. This system is enhanced by photos which show clear links with the Foundation Stage for children's learning and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This is beginning to work very well. However, this system is not yet fully established so that individual learning for the children is maximised.

Although there is limited office space, the staff make sure that all important information relating to the children is kept on the premises. The details of children and staff are clear and filed confidentially. Staff are vigilant in maintaining records about accidents or other incidents. Staff's willingness to store other information at their homes such as self evaluation documentation or child protection information means that this also can be quickly found should it be needed. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection the group was asked to ensure that complaints policy contains up to date contact details for the regulatory body. In addition to the complaints policy, the group now display Ofsted's poster for parents with the relevant contact number on the notice board.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection of the funded nursery education, the pre-school was asked to further increase opportunities to encourage the older children to develop their writing skills to a higher level in their daily activities and routines. The staff have added pads and pencil to the role play areas and chalks to the garden. The children often practise their writing skills by taking notes as they chat on the phone in the phone box or making lists as they play in the home corner or shop.

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.

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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):

- continue to develop the observation system to maximise individual learning for the children and involve parents within this where appropriate. (also applies to nursery education).

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):

- make improvements as indicated in the care section above.

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