

Dalston Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY361016
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Inspector	Stephen Andrew Blake

Setting Address	Youth and Community Centre, Recreation Field, The Green, Dalston, Cumbria, CA5 7QB
Telephone number	07880863122
E-mail	
Registered person	Dalston Pre-School Nursery
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Dalston Pre-School Nursery was first established approximately 20 years ago and has operated on its present site since 2007. The nursery operates from the community centre in the village of Dalston, approximately five miles from Carlisle. Children attending the nursery have sole use of the main hall, music room and associated facilities during session times. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 09.15 to 11.45 during school term times.

There are currently 10 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, seven children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves children from the immediate and extended rural areas.

Dalston Pre-School Nursery is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of members of the local community and employs two staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children thrive because staff provide a clean and appropriately maintained environment.

Although staff have established generally appropriate systems to monitor the medical needs of individual children, the procedure for reviewing the ongoing medication needs of children is not robust. Staff implement appropriate procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Children are supported by staff to help them gain and develop an age-appropriate understanding of hygiene and personal care.

Children enjoy a range of age-appropriate activities that enable them to explore, test and develop their physical skills. The new staff team have recently been appointed and have an appropriate awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage'. They are developing an understanding of each child's stage of development. Children are supported effectively by staff as they try new experiences, such as sampling a new food at snack time. All children have a positive attitude to physical exercise and enjoy opportunities to challenge and extend their physical development, for example, when crawling through the indoor tunnel or jumping like frogs and dancing the 'Hokey-Cokey' in the adjoining park.

Children's individual health needs are monitored effectively by staff and snacks are planned according to children's dietary requirements. Children have access to drinking water throughout the session and enjoy fresh fruit at snack time. They are beginning to understand the value of good nutrition as staff use appropriate language, for example, during a conversation at snack time.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff undertake daily visual risk assessments which help to identify and minimise potential hazards. Staff have established generally effective systems to monitor the premises to ensure that children are safe and secure. The system to ensure that the fire safety officer's recommendation with regard to the location and maintenance of fire safety equipment is not robust. Staff are developing an appropriate understanding of children's individual abilities and of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits. This means that children have opportunities to safely participate in a range of planned indoor and outdoor activities.

Children stay safe because staff enable them to independently access a range of toys and equipment which meet safety standards. Policies and procedures are generally implemented effectively to help ensure that children are safeguarded. The systems for regularly conducting fire drills and for displaying emergency procedures in the event of a fire are not robust.

Children are secure because they are developing a good relationship with the adults caring for them and are confident to ask staff for help when needed. They are protected by staff who have an appropriate understanding of child protection policies and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at Dalston Pre-School Nursery. They achieve because staff use their understanding of child development and of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage', to provide satisfactory care and education. The new staff team use their knowledge of child development appropriately to plan activities and resources that are accessible and age-appropriate in accordance with individual children's abilities.

Children settle quickly on arrival as staff ensure they have information from parents and carers regarding the child's individual needs for that day. The new staff team are beginning to recognise the uniqueness of each child and this helps the youngest children make progress. Staff are establishing close and caring relationships and this helps to increase children's sense of trust and develop a strong sense of self.

Staff support children's early communication skills appropriately through sensitive and age-appropriate interactions. Children relate well to each other and are developing a strong relationship with staff. They are beginning to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they participate in a range of activities, for example, when using the adjoining park and in discussions at registration and snack times.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are creating a relaxed and supportive learning environment as they get to know each child's individual needs and abilities. Children are motivated and challenged as staff provide a range of accessible resources to support their development across all areas of learning. Children are eager to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. Children are encouraged by staff to experiment with marks to represent their ideas and develop the skills that will enable them to write their own names. They use their imagination appropriately, and are beginning to make sense of the world around them, for example, when going for local walks.

Children work well together. For example, they share tools when using a range of resources at the sand table and when one child offers help to another. Staff challenge children's mathematical thinking appropriately, for example, when asking children to identify a range of mathematical shapes and using nursery rhymes for counting. Children's vocabulary is supported effectively by staff who encourage children to talk about their day during registration and discussions at story time.

Staff quickly obtain information from parents about children's individual needs and background circumstances. They share verbal information with parents on a daily basis about their child's care routine and have established effective written systems to communicate daily with parents about their child's activities and learning. As a result, parents are developing confidence in the ability of staff to meet the individual needs of their child.

Staff are new to the setting and have not yet established an effective approach to planning that enables them to be clear about the learning intentions of activities provided. However, staff have a clear vision about how they plan to do this in the future. The setting is open three mornings each week but children do not all attend each session. Staff have not yet established a system to monitor individual children's learning experiences to ensure they receive a broad curriculum on days they attend. Although staff responsible for the planning and delivery of

early learning are experienced and qualified, they have not attended training in the delivery of early years education, such as the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage'. Staff have established a key worker system and are implementing systems to individually plan and monitor children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the nursery because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children's behaviour is good because staff implement age-appropriate and sensitive behaviour management strategies. They work well together and are considerate and helpful towards each other, for example, when helping to clear away or sharing their resources during a craft activity. Children are developing an appropriate understanding of right and wrong as staff offer gentle reminders to care for each other, speak politely and talk about the importance of sharing.

Children have a range of opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the community around them through planned activities and outings to local places of interest. This positive approach means that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The new staff team are seeking parent's views about their child's needs and interests and as a result, parents are developing confidence in the ability of staff to meet the individual needs of their child. Staff have established an effective system to provide parents with regular written and verbal information regarding their child's routine throughout their time at nursery. Staff ensure they have generally appropriate information from parents about children's care routines. They do not have written consent from parents for children to use the adjoining park and area surrounding the community centre.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care is enhanced because staff have established an appropriate environment conducive to satisfactory care and education. The quality of leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory.

The premises are generally well-organised. Staff provide an appropriate range of indoor and outdoor learning opportunities for children. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed.

Children benefit because staff working with children are appropriately qualified. The new staff team are committed to continuous improvement and development. Staff are supported appropriately by the voluntary management committee and there are generally effective systems in place to ensure that the setting's policies and procedures are consistently applied. The system for updating the setting's policies and procedures is not robust. 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

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.

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 QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- review the system for monitoring and updating parents written consent for the administration of prescribed medication
- review the system to ensure that the fire safety officer's recommendations are adhered to, with regard to the regular practising of fire drills, the location and maintenance of fire equipment and the displaying of fire evacuation signs
- review the system for recording parental agreement to individual care and activities provided for children, with regard to obtaining parental agreement for children to use the adjoining park and area surrounding the community centre
- review the policies and procedures, to reflect the changing needs of children, staff and premises.

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):

- review the system for planning children's learning so that staff are clear about learning intentions
- review the system for staff training and development to ensure that staff have ongoing training in appropriate early years guidance, such as the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage'
- review the plans to ensure that children who do not attend each session receive a range of activities across the curriculum on the days they are present.

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