

Downside Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY363763
Inspection date	17/11/2008
Inspector	Susan Tuffnell

Setting address	Downside Neighbourhood Centre, Oakwood Avenue, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU5 4AS
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Downside Pre-School originally opened in 2000 and changed its premises in 2008. It operates from a separate unit situated within the Neighbourhood Centre building on the site of Downside School in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. The pre-school has sole use of the unit. A ramp to the main entrance and widened door frames ensure that the premises are easily accessible. There are toilet facilities for the disabled. Children have access to a secure and fully enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the local area and has links with the school.

The pre-school is open during school term times from 09:05 to 11:35 and 12:30 to 15:00 Monday to Friday. There are 24 places for children on the Early Years Register and there are currently 39 attending. There are four staff members who work with the children. All of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level two or three. The pre-school is committee run by parent and carer volunteers and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, Downside Pre-School makes good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Planning is detailed and provides for challenge and differentiation and is sufficiently broad to offer a full range of activities and opportunities for the children. Staff create a very welcoming environment and are skilled at ensuring children benefit from the provision. Partnership with parents is especially effective to forge strong links between the child's home and the setting. Staff have developed secure relationships with other professionals such as the early years support service, the inclusion officer and the early years advisory teachers. Specific training in sign language, equality and diversity and inclusion ensures that staff are confident and knowledgeable and the diversity of individuals and communities is valued and respected. The manager leads a culture of reflective practice and works alongside staff to review the strengths and weaknesses of the setting's self-evaluation and to continuously improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- ensure that children's individual learning needs are carried forward, implemented into future planning and evaluated to give a clear picture of progress
- ensure that information about children's starting points is collected from parents and carers to inform planning for each individual child
- devise a policy to use when inducting staff regarding the prohibition of alcohol and other substances when working with children.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The knowledge, experience and enthusiasm of the manager ensures that all aspect of the provision are well led. Excellent implementation of policies, records and procedures support the safe and efficient management of the setting and ensure that the needs of all the children are met. Staff show a genuine desire to promote the best care and opportunities for children, they continuously review and update training and knowledge. Extensive training has been completed such as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and the Safeguarding Children Board. Staff are well qualified and committed to extend their professional qualifications to provide the best care and education for the children.

Robust safeguarding procedures are consistently implemented to ensure that children are protected. The recruitment process includes a clear induction programme and a high level of support for staff, students and volunteers. However, a policy regarding the prohibition of alcohol and other substances when working with children is not in place. The manager and staff work closely with the parent run committee and meetings are arranged so that everyone works together and shares good practice. Children are safe at the setting because of the high level of attention to security. For example, staff are alerted to visitors by a bell at the entrance, a visitors book is signed and they are closely supervised. Extensive risk assessments are updated regularly and daily health and safety checks that cover all areas of the setting support the efficient running of the provision.

The manager, committee and staff demonstrate a clear commitment to working with parents, carers and external agencies. Superb work is done to forge closer links. For example, a home visit and parent induction is carried out by the key worker to build strong relationships with the parents and children. A comprehensive parent pack containing routines, procedures and information about the setting plus a flexible attendance policy ensures that the individual needs of the children are sensitively considered. The home link diaries ensure a regular exchange of information that includes parents and staff comments and parents are kept informed by attending consultation meetings such as the EYFS framework. Recent questionnaires based on Every Child Matters show the setting's success with the majority of responses from parents indicating outstanding practice.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are offered very good opportunities and an excellent range of activities that enable them to make progress across all areas of learning and development. Staff respond positively to children's interests and enrich their learning experiences by enabling children to initiate play and lead activities. For example, children explore and identify numbers and letters and link them to wider concepts of the environment as they use the computer. Comprehensive observations and assessments carried out by staff track children's progress. However, these are not securely linked to children's individual learning needs and assessment files do not identify children's starting point to ensure that planning for the next stage of

learning is effective.

Staff support the children well and encourage them to play imaginatively and be creative. For example, children freely access collage materials to make individual interpretations for the autumn display. They use real vegetables and food packaging in the home corner to enhance their role play experiences. Children's creative work is valued by the staff with attractive displays around the play room. Children show interest and enthusiasm in a wide range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities which provide good levels of challenge. For example, the well resourced outdoor area encourages children to practise physical skills as they jump across the tyres and stepping stones, climb apparatus and play group games. Children take turns to give instructions in a game that involves a series of movements. For example, children run, skip, hop and perform star jumps in sequence. The thoughtful planning of interesting topics involving the wider world gives children opportunities to experience a variety of different cultures. Children learn about traditional clothes and food and engage in creative work to investigate the celebration of Eid. Books and attractive visual aids such as photographs and posters show positive images of a multicultural world. The language rich environment and effective teaching results in children being confident in communication, language and literacy. Extensive labelling, attractive book corner and well planned activities such as the sound and action animal activity and the group action songs help children attain skills in this area of development. Children are happy and sociable. They seek out friends and play cooperatively together. Children are self-motivated and have a good level of independence. For example, they serve themselves at snack time, are confident in toileting, choose resources freely and instigate play. Warm, trusting relationships with staff ensure that children are valued as unique individuals, supported well and their needs sensitively met.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.