

Downham Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Downham Nursery School is one of two settings which are privately owned. It opened in 2009 and operates from a variety of classrooms, on two floors, within a large house, which has been modified for the purpose of a childcare facility. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is located in Downham Market, in Norfolk. It is open each weekday during school term times from 8.00am to 6.00pm.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 50 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 56 children, aged from two to under five years on roll.

There are five members of staff, including the manager, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level three or above. The setting receives support from the local authority. It has achieved the 'Norfolk quality assurance' scheme and an award from 'Investors in people'.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's individual needs are very well met as they are provided with a good range of interesting and stimulating activities. Children benefit from a bright, well-designed environment which promotes their choice and independence. Good use is made of the outdoor area, with children able to access active and outdoor play throughout the day. The staff team is consistent, experienced and well-qualified. Key staff observe children closely and use their observations to plan for children's progress across the six areas of learning. An excellent relationship exists with parents who are encouraged to provide a wealth of information about their children's home lives and achievements. The setting uses a range of methods to reflect on its practice and strive for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the outside area to provide increased opportunities for children to travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment
- create a comfortable space where children and adults can enjoy books together
- develop systems to share information about individual children's learning and development with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage when children attend other settings.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are effectively safeguarded from the risk of abuse or neglect as safeguarding is given a very high priority. Rigorous recruitment procedures ensure that all staff working with children are suitable to do so. There is a clear line of responsibility for reporting concerns about children's welfare and staff are clear about their duty to report concerns. Policies and procedures regarding safeguarding are effective and the necessary information is easily accessible to all staff. Excellent security systems are in place. The nursery grounds are securely fenced and access to the building is protected by a key pad lock on the outside gate and CCTV. Staff supervise the gate at arrival and collection times and parents, visiting at other times, ring the office bell. There is a system for recording all visitors. This ensures that no unauthorised persons can gain access to the premises. Rigorous risk assessment is carried out to ensure that the premises are safe for children and staff make daily checks of the environment before children arrive. Children develop an exceptional understanding of how to keep themselves safe as staff give them regular explanations about how to play safely. Children playing on the slide are reminded about the safety rules. Children comply readily with requests made by adults to put items away or to stay in a certain area until more adults arrive because the requests are backed up by explanations which children can easily understand. All of the necessary fire equipment is in place and regular monthly fire evacuation drills are held to ensure that children and staff know what to do in the event of a fire or emergency.

The environment is bright, cheerful, and child-centred. Resources are clearly labelled with words and pictures and easily accessible to children. Rooms are organised for different activities with the downstairs used mainly for the older children and the upstairs for younger children. However, the setting has a very flexible approach and children are able to move about the premises freely and access outside play throughout the day. There is a large garden and a paved area adjoining the nursery which is well set up with a range of interesting activities. A covered area and the provision of all weather suits mean that children are able to engage in active play outside in all weathers and throughout the year. The nursery offers a welcoming and inclusive service where all families are valued. The setting obtains very useful information from parents when children start so that they can meet children's needs effectively. Parents fill in an under-fives questionnaire and an 'All about me' sheet so that staff know about children's preferences, cultures and backgrounds. Key persons observe children carefully when they start to ascertain their stage of development and starting points in order to help them to progress. Parents views are actively sought and taken into consideration through questionnaires and the suggestion box. Parents are encouraged to share information about their children's achievements and special events in their lives. These are attractively displayed in scrap books and on the 'special things we do at home' board showing that the setting greatly values parents' contributions. Parents are kept informed through the website, notice boards and the informative school brochure. The setting communicates with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage when they are aware that children attend other settings. However, there are as yet no systems in place to share information about

individual children's learning and development when they attend other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage. The staff team works well together and staff's views are valued and taken into account. The owner and manager demonstrate a clear vision for the nursery and a commitment to provide a high quality service. They reflect on their practice in order to effect improvement and partake in external schemes such as the 'Norfolk quality Assurance' scheme and 'Investors in people' to identify ways of developing the service.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are eager to attend the nursery and enter enthusiastically. They are greeted warmly by staff. Children make good progress in their learning and development because staff make systematic observations of their play and learning and key persons plan the next steps for their progress in order to extend their learning. The knowledge staff gain from parents is useful in planning activities which are in line with children's interests and preoccupations. Staff meet every week and take account of individual children's needs when planning further activities. Children are able to choose from a wide range of stimulating activities and show high levels of motivation and involvement in their play. There are plenty of opportunities for active learning, for example splatter painting or hunting for bugs in the garden. Children communicate very confidently with staff, who listen sensitively as they express their ideas or seek support. Children also communicate well with each other, for example chatting together as they observe the frogs spawn. Children are learning to recognise print as they hang their coats up on labelled hooks or select resources from labelled boxes. Staff talk to them about the different letter sounds in their names, linking sounds to letters. Children have good opportunities to practise their mark-making skills as they write out labels and tickets in the clothes shop, write down notes as they make an imaginary arrest, while playing as a police man, or write their names on their pictures. There are two well-stocked book areas on both floors with small cushions stored nearby for children to use when listening to stories. However, there is little ready-made comfortable space where children and adults can settle down together to enjoy books.

Staff pick up on opportunities to develop children's mathematical skills, asking them questions such as 'how many have we got?' and 'how many are there now?'. Adults use the language of size and shape as they do puzzles with children or sort the balls in the ball pool. Children use their imaginations as they play in the well equipped role-play area. They express themselves using different media and their paintings are valued and displayed attractively throughout the nursery. There are plenty of opportunities for them to explore and investigate as they play in the sand or with play dough. Knowledge and understanding of the world is very well promoted through activities such as observing and talking about the features of frog spawn. Children find lady birds in the garden and watch them move over their hands. Magnifying viewers are available to watch the bugs they collect. Children learn about living creatures as they learn to care for the nursery guinea pig or visit local farms to see the lambs. They have access to a computer so they can develop skills in information technology. Large tyres in the garden are used as vegetable

planters, where children can learn about growing or just enjoy digging to see what they can find. Children plant sunflowers and write their own labels on their pots. They develop physical skills and enjoy plenty of active play outside. They have room to move freely and run in the large garden. They are learning to move with coordination and control. However, some of the equipment in the garden area is not particularly challenging and opportunities to travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment are limited. Children are very interested and motivated to learn and are busily occupied in the activities provided. They are very confident in seeking out adults for support when they need help. The environment is well designed to promote children's independence, with resources and equipment easily accessible at their level. Children change in and out of shoes and coats supported by adults when necessary. They enjoy helping to make their own sandwiches and wiping the tables. They learn to develop respect and understanding for other people through celebrating different festivals and through visitors who talk to them about 'caring for each other and sharing'.

Children's health is promoted well. Regular access to the outdoor area ensures that they benefit from plenty of fresh air and active play. They enjoy healthy snacks of fresh fruit, breadsticks or sandwiches which they make themselves. Staff sit down with them at snack and meal times to make them pleasant social occasions, when discussion takes place about the types of food which are good for us. Parents provide packed lunches and guidance is provided to encourage parents to provide healthy options. Children are learning about the benefits of good hygiene as regular explanations are given by staff. They know that they must wash their hands after handling the guinea pig, before preparing or eating food and after using the toilet. They need little prompting and know that if they don't wash their hands they might get a 'poorly tummy'. Excellent explanations are given to children throughout the daily routine to enable them to learn about keeping safe. Children have built up warm and trusting relationships with the staff and as a result they feel extremely safe and secure in the setting. They are busily occupied and therefore behave exceptionally well. Good behaviour is promoted through praise, positive encouragement and consistent role modelling by staff. Children respond well to simple instructions from adults and play and work together cooperatively. They are encouraged to be polite and often say 'please' and 'thank you' without prompting. Children are developing skills for the future as they learn to be independent, make choices and progress in all the areas of development.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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