



## Mowden Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	301168
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 February 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann Doubleday
<b>Setting Address</b>	c/o Mowden Infant School, Bushel Hill Drive, Darlington, County Durham, DL3 9QG
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<b>Registered person</b>	Mowden Pre-School Group
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Mowden Pre-School is a committee run group. It was registered in September 1996 and operates from a classroom within Mowden Infant School. The group serves the local and surrounding communities. A maximum of 18 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open for five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:05 to 11.35 and 12:40 to 15:10.

There are currently 37 children aged from three years to under five years on roll. All

of the children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school supports children with special needs and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

Eight staff work with the children. Five of the staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is working towards the Quality Kite Mark, a quality assurance scheme.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's physical development is supported satisfactorily, with opportunities to have some physical exercise each day. They know how exercise affects their bodies. For example, they know their hearts beat faster and they are hot after movement sessions. However, during the winter, children do not have sufficient opportunities to go outside or to develop their large motor skills. Children can rest and be active according to their individual needs.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene through daily routines. They are encouraged to wash their hands regularly before snacks and after using the toilet, and know why they need to do so. However, children use cold water and a communal bowl for hand washing in the pre-school room and plates are not used at snack time, food is eaten directly from the table. This means that good hygiene practices are not always promoted.

Systems are in place for addressing children's health needs. For example, most staff hold a relevant first aid qualification and appropriate documentation is used for the recording of accidents and medication. The effective use of a sick children's policy enables the children's health needs to be well met.

Drinking water is readily available throughout the session. Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet through the promotion of a healthy snack of fresh fruit each day. Staff are aware of and meet children's individual dietary needs.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment where risks are identified and minimised. This means they are able to move around safely, freely and independently. There is a clear health and safety statement in place. Staff give priority to helping children understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are taught to use equipment and how to cross roads safely.

There is a very good range of developmentally appropriate resources, which are well-organised in child height furniture to encourage independent access. The security of the premises is good and there are clear lost and uncollected child policies

in place. The high adult-to-child ratios ensure children are well supervised and they remain safe.

Staff have attended child protection training. They have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities, and procedures are in place in the event of an allegation against staff. This means the welfare of children is protected.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting. They arrive happy and eager to participate, and are making good progress. Close and caring relationships with staff increase the children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Children are developing good relationships with each other and their communication skills are well supported through good adult-to-child interactions.

Children move around the rooms freely. They select their own activities and take part in adult directed activities. Play opportunities are purposeful and developmentally appropriate, resulting in children being motivated and interested. This is evident in the good planning and evaluation of activities. One member of staff has attended the Birth to three matters training and some aspects are implemented for the younger children.

There are clear settling in procedures in place for children, which include gaining information from parents about their child's routines and care. Staff are sensitive to and meet children's individual needs well. Children behave well and are developing a sense of right and wrong. They respond well to staff who clearly explain why they should not do something.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy their time at the group and achieve well, because staff use their good knowledge of the Foundation Stage to provide high quality nursery education. Staff have attended Foundation Stage training. They plan and prepare well an interesting programme of activities across the six areas of learning and have clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the delivery of focused activities. Assessment systems are in place and are completed well. They link clearly to the Foundation Stage curriculum and show how children are progressing. Parents contribute to their child's initial and on-going assessment. The planning takes into account children's individual learning and development in order to ensure appropriate challenge. The good use of resources and the clearly defined activity areas support the learning opportunities offered to the children. Staff use good questioning skills to further extend children's thoughts and ideas.

Children are developing good communication skills. They show confidence in speaking to others and hold a conversation for extended periods of time. They talk freely about their own experiences and ideas well throughout the session. Children are developing a sense of time, as they remember what they did yesterday and begin to learn the days of the week. They are developing good writing skills and hold

pencils correctly as they make good use of the mark making area. Children form recognisable marks and letters, and they have opportunities to recognise their own names. They are becoming aware of the initial letter sounds in words, particularly the initial letter of their name. Children have good access to books, they listen well to stories and can predict what is going to happen next, recalling events from familiar stories.

Children use a computer well. They control the mouse and complete simple programs confidently. They also have good access to programmable toys. They are developing a good understanding of number; they count reliably beyond ten and are beginning to recognise some numerals. Children recognise and name shapes confidently, they understand and are using size language well. They have good opportunities to use problem solving and calculating in every day routines and activities.

Children are beginning to develop a sense of space. They manoeuvre their bodies to create intended movements inside the pre-school. They show good control as they handle tools and equipment and develop good levels of hand-eye co-ordination, for example, as they successfully thread straws through holes to make a robot and weave fabrics to make a model of the Angel of the North. However, children do not have sufficient opportunities for large physical exercise in order to develop their gross motor skills.

The children are confident in their play and learning and persist for extended periods of time at activities. They are well-behaved and are beginning to show care and concern for others. Children show good interest in their environment and the world around them, for example, they know that snails are slimy and slugs eat cabbages. They explore well using a variety of materials, such as sand, water, magnifying glasses and magnets, and show an interest in why things happen. They talk about their own families and are developing a strong understanding of other cultures and beliefs through the use of interesting resources, visitors to the setting and well-planned activities. Children are developing good self-care skills. For example, they learn to put on their own coats, wash their own hands and wipe their own nose, disposing of their tissues appropriately. They are developing a secure knowledge of health and bodily awareness, for example, they understand why they need to wash their hands before eating and know the effects of exercise on their bodies.

Children recognise and can name many colours. They access and use well a range of creative resources and use their imagination well in role play. Children construct with a purpose in mind and build three-dimensional structures confidently using a variety of materials independently. They use their senses to explore a variety of materials, for example, as they feel the texture of fabrics used for weaving. Children join in and enjoy familiar songs and clap rhythmically.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed and staff ensure resources are readily available. Planned activities are undertaken that positively represent the local and wider

community. For example, children learn about Eid, Diwali and Hogmanay. A good range of resources is available reflecting other cultures and races. This helps increase children's awareness of diversity and develop a positive attitude to others. The staff's understanding of each child's needs is used well to encourage a sense of security and belonging. For example, staff gently remind children with allergies that they are not to use soap for hand washing. There is a clear special needs statement in place and there is an identified special needs co-ordinators who has received relevant training. Children with special needs are integrated well and all children are included in activities.

Children are well-behaved and polite in response to the expectations of staff. They take turns and are beginning to show care and concern for others. Children's understanding of right and wrong is increased through the good example set and gentle reminders they receive from staff. This fosters children's spiritual moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the two-way sharing of information. Parents receive regular newsletters, information about the Foundation Stage and further information is displayed around the setting for their attention. They are involved in the initial and on going assessments of their child. They receive regular formal feedback on their child's developmental progress. Parents are encouraged to continue their child's learning at home, for example, through the use of the pre-school book lending system.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children, which contributes to them being happy and settled. Children move around confidently and independently. They initiate their own play and learning well as they move freely between the activity areas.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good and promotes the children's learning. Many of the staff have early years qualifications. The management undertakes regular appraisals with staff and promotes their attendance at relevant training. The knowledge gained by staff is used to further support children's care and welfare. All staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn. Consequently, children's progress towards the early learning goals is good.

Adult-to-child ratios are met effectively. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. All staff are appropriately vetted and there are clear staff recruitment and induction procedures in place.

Required documents are well-organised, readily available and stored confidentially. The detailed policies and procedures in place are shared well with staff to appropriately promote the welfare, care and learning of the children. There are effective systems in place for the sharing of information with parents about the service and their child's activities. The provision meets the needs of the children who

attend.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to ensure the register clearly records times of children's arrival and departure, to develop opportunities for children to recognise changes in their bodies through everyday routines and to develop the organisation of the book corner.

Children's safety has improved, as the register now shows their hours of attendance. Children know about the effect of exercise on their bodies and how to keep themselves healthy. The book area has been made brighter and children are accessing books independently.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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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):

- improve hygienic practices particularly in relation to snack time and hand washing in the pre school room

#### **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):

- increase the opportunities for children to play outside on a regular basis

throughout the year and to develop their gross motor skills. (also applies to care)

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