

Down On The Farm

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY348665

Inspection date

25/03/2011

Inspector

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Setting address

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Telephone number

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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*.

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.

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Description of the setting

Down on the Farm Nursery is privately owned and managed. It opened in 2007 and operates from two rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated on a working farm on the outskirts of Hereford. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 5pm for 49 weeks of the year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 15 children may attend the nursery at any one time, of which no more than six may be under two years at any one time. There are currently 48 children on roll. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager has an Early Years Foundation Degree. The nursery is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and is supported by the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The organisation and management of the nursery is highly effective in promoting excellent outcomes for all children. The nursery uses inclusive practice to ensure children's individual needs are fully understood and respected. Exceedingly positive links with parents, carers and others promotes a consistency of care and education for all children. The arrangement for managing the welfare of children is clearly routed in exceedingly good practice. The management have extensive systems in place to monitor, review and reflect on the practice used within the nursery in order to continue to develop high-quality care and education for all 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:

- develop further the systems for all staff to engage in regular cycles of planning and observation, informed by accurate record keeping, including information on children's learning progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The arrangements in place to safeguard children are exemplary. Staff implement the comprehensive policies and procedures effectively. They understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and keep up-to-date with current issues through training. Robust recruitment systems are in place, suitability checks are carried out and new staff undergo a well-planned induction process. The staff are proactive in ensuring the premises and outdoor environment are safe and suitable; this is particularly relevant as the nursery is part of a working farm and children are regularly involved in activities using the farm environment. Children are exceedingly well supervised, the staff encourage children to use safe practices in relation to the wealth of activities they engage in. Detailed risk assessments and ongoing daily checks enable staff to take effective action to minimise any potential risks to children's safety. The premises are safe and secure. The procedures for managing children's good health in relation to hygiene are good. The indoor toys and equipment are regularly cleaned and maintained. First-aid trained staff are always available and follow policies and procedures in relation to dealing with accidents and administering medication.

Children thrive and make exceedingly good progress in their learning and development because of the excellent use made of the environment in which the nursery is located. Exemplary use is made of the outdoor environment and children's access to safe areas of the farm in helping children learn through practical experiences. Priority is given to ensuring staff are well qualified, their ongoing professional development is encouraged. The staff work well together as a team making sure children receive the full benefit of the activities and learning experiences available. The staff help children understand the society they live in, both the local community and the wider world.

The excellent partnership with parents and carers impacts positively on children's achievements, well-being and development. Parents and carers are made welcome; their preferences in relation to their child's care and development are fully understood by staff. The key worker system enables parents and children to build a very good relationship based on information sharing. Parents and carers are encouraged to share information about their child when they first start at the nursery. Detailed information shared verbally and on forms provide staff with information on the child's development and their individual likes and dislikes. Staff use this information to ensure their individual needs are met and to plan activities that help children make good developmental progress. Information on children's stage of development and ongoing targets are shared with parents through children's Learning Journeys and formal parents' evenings. Parents also contribute information to children's Learning Journeys which help staff have a rounded picture of children's progress. Parents are given ample time to settle their children within the nursery, regular visits beforehand enable children to become familiar with the setting. There are exceedingly good arrangements in place to help children with the transition into school with staff from the school visiting the nursery and the children. The special educational needs coordinator works well in partnership with other professionals involved in children's care. The setting has

also established visits from the local health visitor. There is a consistency in children's care and development.

The manager has involved the staff team in the self-evaluation process. A very detailed evaluation of the nursery has been completed. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated, and parents kept informed of changes that have arisen. Improvements planned for the environment will mean that babies also have free-flow access to outdoor play. There are clear strategies for improvements and the previous inspection recommendations have been addressed. The manager uses her good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development to monitor the work of the staff and ensure the quality of teaching and learning is high. The setting has nearly completed a quality mark award.

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

The organisation of the provision clearly reflects the management's vision to provide children with excellent learning opportunities through practical play and exploration. Children's understanding of the natural world is fully enhanced by the outstanding use of the environment in which the nursery is located. Children learn about healthy eating and where food comes from by watching farm activities from planting to harvesting potatoes. They help select potatoes to take back to the nursery and use in various cooking activities. They learn about the life cycle of animals from baby calves, ducks and chickens and watching birds in the nursery garden. They learn to nurture and care for plants and animals, watering strawberry plants and making birdfeeders.

Children relish their time playing outdoors using a wealth of physical play equipment and activities. Their imaginative play is exceedingly well supported through the imaginative use of resources. A builder's yard was set up outside so that children could use tools and equipment as they acted out familiar situations. Children learn through being naturally inquisitive and developing very practical skills. They learn how to peddle a tractor and trailer around obstacles and work out how to turn the steering wheel in order to reverse backwards and forward to negotiate objects. They find out ways of doing things sometimes through trial and error. For example, finding out how to hang washing on the line when the pegs are not in reach. The solution to move the pegs along the washing line nearer to the clothes was worked out. Children thoroughly enjoy water play. They spend considerable time transferring water from the water butt into other containers. Some children play imaginatively, making soup or having tea parties, while others use the water to water the plants. They show exceedingly good levels of manipulative skills as they turn on and off the tap and fill and pour using different sized containers. Consequently, children are becoming active learners making connections through the activities they use.

Children's social skills their use of language to communicate and ability to use information technology are developing very well; they underpin the skills needed for their future success. Children play a full and active role within the nursery.

They make choices and decisions about the activities they will use and help staff with routine tasks. The babies express their needs for drinks, comfort and when they are tired. Staff respond to children's needs which helps them settle and feel secure. Children show a caring attitude towards each other and are happy to play alone on self-chosen tasks or join in with groups of children playing well together. Most children respond generally well to the positive strategies used to encourage good behaviour. Staff work in partnership with parents to ensure methods used are agreed and consistent with those used by parents. Children have very good relationships with the staff, asking for help when needed or just generally chatting with them. The babies settle well when left by their parents. Their individual care routines are well understood, they have time to be active using age-appropriate resources, have rests or sleep set times for meals and snacks.

The staff use their very good knowledge of children's individual interests and developmental needs to plan a balanced range of child-initiated and adult lead activities which help children make very good progress towards the early learning goals. They interact well in all aspects of children's play knowing when to allow children to develop ideas and explore activities at their own pace and when to join in and support children's learning through appropriate questioning or modelling language. However, some written assessment records do not always give an accurate picture of children's progress.

Children take increasing responsibility for their own personal hygiene washing their hands appropriately throughout the day particularly after outdoor play and visiting the farm. They learn social skills and good manners sitting together for snacks and meals. They develop and use their small muscles and hand eye coordination in all that they do. They use knives to spread butter or cheese on crackers at snack time and pour their own drinks into their beakers. They discuss with staff the importance of healthy diets and exercise. Children learn about keeping safe through discussions and the activities provided. When out on walks they learn to acknowledge politely when car drivers slow down for them, but not to wave at the drivers as they may not know who they are.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
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	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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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