

Downside Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY363763

Inspection date

14/05/2012

Inspector

Karen Molloy

Setting address

Downside Neighbourhood Centre, Oakwood Avenue,
Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU5 4AS

Telephone number

01582 660833

Email

downsidepreschool@hotmail.co.uk

Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Downside Pre-School originally opened in 2000 and changed 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. 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 8.45am to 11.45am and 12.15pm to 3.15pm, Monday to Friday.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 24 children. There are currently 52 on roll. There are six staff members who work with the children. In addition, there is a volunteer and casual worker. All the staff have early years qualifications, including National Vocational Qualification at levels two or three, a Foundation degree in Early Years Practice and Early Years Professional Status. The pre-school is run by a committee of parent and carer volunteers. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and National Day Nursery Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children flourish in the pre-school and are making excellent progress within their development because of the exemplary quality of provision. Overall, planning and observation systems effectively meet the needs of all children. Staff are dedicated, proactive and highly successful in their roles. Inclusive practice is promoted exceptionally well, ensuring that children's welfare needs are met and children maximise their full potential. Partnership with parents is a particularly strong aspect of the setting, with excellent strategies in place to share information. The pre-school reviews the provision rigorously, identifies what can be improved and drives ambition extremely well. This results in the setting having an outstanding capacity to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhancing current systems further to enable children to be more actively involved in the planning processes of their own learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are exceptionally well safeguarded and protected in the setting because staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of child protection policies and procedures. They participate in discussions and quizzes during staff meetings to review their knowledge on policy and practice and they have all attended safeguarding training. Robust recruitment systems are in place to ensure the suitability of staff. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure the premises are safe and secure. Excellent strategies are in place to ensure children's safety is monitored during opening and going home times, ensuring children are only released to known adults. Staff conduct extensive checks on the premises, equipment and resources to ensure these are safe and suitable for children's use. This means that children are able to move safely and freely around the setting.

Staff are very knowledgeable about the Early Years Foundation Stage and use this knowledge extremely well to support children in their learning. The environment is very well organised and accessible to the children with clearly designated areas. The storage systems are at low level and clearly labelled to encourage independent choices. Resources are plentiful, of high quality and suitable for all the children. The 'free flow' system enables children to move freely between the inside and outdoors throughout the day and staff are well deployed within the setting. This means children thrive and make excellent progress in their development.

The pre-school is exceedingly well led and managed. The staff team works extremely effectively together. Staff are highly qualified, very motivated, dedicated to their role and committed to ensuring the best outcomes for children. Staff constantly reflect on their practice; self-evaluation involves all staff, parents/carers and children, thereby valuing everyone's input. Staff have clear aims and all share the same vision to drive improvement and keep children at the centre of their practice. They have addressed recommendations from the last inspection and, as a result, they have a much better understanding of children's starting points as they gather more information from parents. They continually look for ways to improve the provision for the children and set ambitious and appropriate targets, such as implementing an operational plan. Staff have excellent opportunities for professional development. Thorough inductions, appraisals and professionals' discussions are in place to discuss practice and identify training needs. Staff are given designated roles and responsibilities which promote their own development and ensure that all provision is met throughout the session. Staff are highly qualified and they continue to undertake further training in order to further extend their professional expertise. The setting has accreditation for ICAN speech and language development and an award for 'Healthy under 5's'. Staff have also taken part in the 'Every Child a Talker' initiative, which has resulted in them establishing communication-friendly spaces. Excellent communication between staff through regular staff meetings and discussion at the end of each session ensures everyone is fully informed, which positively impacts on outcomes for children.

Partnerships with parents is a particular strength and a key element of the setting's success. Staff go beyond expectations to develop highly effective relationships. For

example, they conduct home visits before children attend, where they gather valuable information about each child, through a home observation sheet and detailed and useful 'All about me' form. A parent pack given to new parents ensures they are well informed of what is offered and includes a welcoming introduction to the staff team. Ongoing communication with parents and carers is excellent via parent consultations, policies and procedures, a key person leaflet, information on notice boards and regular discussions with key persons. Staff are proactive in encouraging parental involvement; parents are invited to attend song sessions and various workshops. Parents' feedback is invited and they comment very positively on the friendly and approachable staff, the way parents' concerns and worries are taken into consideration and how happy the children are.

There are excellent systems and strong, professional links with other provisions and professionals who are involved with the children, such as advisory teachers, local schools and the speech and language therapist. These links are well established and contribute well to supporting children's welfare and learning. The pre-school is exceptionally inclusive. Staff are very proactive in seeking and offering sensitive support to children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff readily adapt activities to ensure that all children can access these; staff use signing and visual gestures to support this practice. Children have access to a wide range of resources that reflect diversity. This means that the individual needs of all children are met and all children are included fully in the life of the setting.

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

Children are very happy and settled within the pre-school. The quality of welfare, learning and development is outstanding. Children form positive and trusting relationships with staff, who are excellent role models. Staff interact with children enthusiastically; staff listen well and acknowledge children's comments and requests, responding appropriately and effectively. Staff are highly skilled at using discussion and questioning techniques to fully extend children's learning. In turn, children approach staff confidently and with enthusiasm. Overall, systems are extremely effective, ensuring flexibility in planning for the group. Planning and assessment leads to very positive outcomes. However, the manager is keen to develop planning further, so that children are given additional input into this practice and, therefore, their own learning. Excellent systems are in place to monitor and record children's progress, which ensure that staff have a clear and up-to-date vision of children's individual stages of development. Children are inquisitive and eager to participate in activities. They play exceptionally well, both independently and cooperatively and develop firm friendships. Staff use their effective skills in the delivery of structured activities, which ensure children are busy, keen and fully engaged.

Children participate in an extensive range of activities and experiences. Their communication, language and literacy skills are promoted very well. They are beginning to recognise letters and sounds and are keen to tell staff 'my name

starts with a curly c'. Self-registration encourages all children to find their name. A well-resourced book area fosters children's love of books and they spend a great deal of time looking at books and 'reading' stories. Good listening by staff, their extension of children's vocabulary and singing together further develops these skills. Children thoroughly enjoy using the excellent role play area, dressing up and creating role play situations, making food for each other and caring for their babies. Children are introduced to early mathematical concepts. They are supported to count the number of children and adults and learn to count down from 10 as they take the teddy puppets out one at a time in the '10 in the bed' activity. There are many opportunities for children to be creative; they paint, use the blackboard to chalk and make collages. As they use foam rollers in paint, they mix colours, exclaiming 'I'm making a different colour!' Children develop a knowledge and understanding of the world; they use dual language books and make a display of 'children of the world' with maps and different flags.

Children have an excellent understanding of keeping themselves healthy and safe. They benefit from healthy snacks and information is shared with parents about nutritious packed lunches. Children discuss healthy foods and an adult-led activity enables children to make their own tasty wraps for snack time. Innovative loan schemes, such as 'Bungle bear', promote a healthy life style and foster good links between home and the pre-school. Children are encouraged to look after the bear for a few days and parents fill in the bear's diary about activities the children do with him. This is then discussed when he returns to the pre-school. Physical play bags with music and movement compact discs, balls, bean bags and hoops are designed for parents to use indoors and outdoors and promote active play. Children use the well-planned garden to participate in a wide variety of interesting activities, such as playing 'snakes and ladders' and climbing the tree and 'around the pirate ship'. They benefit from regular fresh air and exercise as well as developing their physical skills. Children adopt good habits relating to their personal hygiene, such as washing hands before snack time. They were recently visited by a mobile dentist and used large teeth and toothbrushes to practise their teeth cleaning skills. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through effective practices. They are taught how to do things safely, such as carrying chairs. Children are encouraged to take risks, but having sensible rules and boundaries within the pre-school also develops their understanding of keeping safe.

Children's behaviour is excellent and they are familiar with the sensible rules, such as 'walking feet inside' and older children reminding the younger ones. They show kindness and respect to each other. For example, they say please and thank you to each other and ask what their friends would like to eat in the role play area. Staff have implemented excellent strategies to encourage positive behaviour. They offer much praise and encouragement. 'Special mentions' acknowledge children's acts of kindness, efforts and achievements. These are discussed at large group time and celebrated with others and displayed as a reminder of their 'special mention'. Children show great pride in these and it is very effective in developing their confidence and self-esteem.

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	1
--	---

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

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
---	-----

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
--	-----