

Mowden Pre-School Group

c/o Mowden Infant School, Bushel Hill Drive, Darlington, County Durham, DL3 9QG

Inspection date	11/07/2014
Previous inspection date	02/12/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children make good progress because staff have a very good knowledge of them and their individual interests. This means that staff are able to meet children's needs effectively.
- Children make very good progress in personal and social development. Staff offer extremely good support to enable children to play together with others, sharing and taking turns.
- Children are very safe in the pre-school. There are robust procedures in place to ensure that children are safe at all times.
- Staff work effectively with parents. There are successful strategies in place to engage parents, so that they work together with the staff from pre-school to support children's learning at home.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There are occasions during some large group sessions, such as show and tell, when some children lose interest in the activity, which has an impact on their enjoyment of the session.
- There is room to enhance the already good provision for writing, particularly in the outdoor area, by extending the range of early writing opportunities available.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector toured the pre-school with the manager.
- The inspector observed activities in the indoor and outdoor learning environment.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the pre-school.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and from information included in the pre-school's own parent survey.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times throughout the session.

Inspector

Elizabeth Fish

Full report

Information about the setting

Mowden Pre-School Group was registered in 1999 on the Early Years Register. It operates from a classroom within Mowden Infant School in Darlington. Access to the room is by two steps, but it can be accessed on one level through the infant school premises. There is an enclosed outside area for outdoor play. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff, including the manager. Six members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, one at level 5 and one at level 6. There are currently 39 children attending who are within the early years age range. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 8.45am to 11.45am and 12.15pm to 3.15pm, term time only. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. The pre-school supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- review the organisation of large group activities to ensure that all children remain fully engaged and able to enjoy the activities
- reflect on and develop ways to enhance early writing skills by increasing opportunities for writing and drawing in the outdoor area.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff in the pre-school are enthusiastic about their work. They ensure that children enjoy a range of interesting and challenging experiences across the seven areas of learning. The learning environment is well resourced with open-ended resources, which children can use in a range of ways. For example, some children use crates to make a Christmas tree, while other children use different crates to create the structure for a den. Children are incredibly motivated as they concentrate for extended periods of time while they build with a clear purpose in mind. They demonstrate high levels of involvement as they persevere and find solutions to problems, such as how to place the last crate, which they were standing on, on top of the tall Christmas tree. They also demonstrate good negotiations skills, as they negotiate turns or ask for a crate that someone else is using. These skills prepare children effectively for the next stage in learning. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of how to support children's play. Children are given the time to explore things for themselves and solve problems. Timely interventions and thoughtful questioning means that children are encouraged to think carefully about what they are doing and how they can develop play further. Children learn in a variety of group situations too, including large group activities.

However, there are occasions when some planned activities, such as show and tell, do not hold all children's attentions and as a result, some children find it difficult to maintain concentration during these times.

All children make good progress in the pre-school. Staff talk to parents before children start and find out where they are at in their learning. This helps staff to develop a clear understanding of the needs and interests of the children when they start. Staff carry out regular and precise assessments, which are matched to age-related expectations. As a result, they have a good understanding of children's achievements and how they can support them further. They work effectively with other agencies to incorporate targets for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities into their planning. Staff have established good relationships with parents. They have effective strategies in place to help parents to understand how they can support their children's learning. Parents are invited to help in the session and staff share children's achievements at the end of the session. Parents comment that they know how they can support their children further because staff talk to them about what they are working on in the pre-school and how parents can support them at home. They communicate particularly well with parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or children, who speak English as an additional language. For example, they talk to parents about the length of time that a child has been in the country and how much English is spoken at home. They also find out key words in children's home language to support children in the pre-school.

Staff support communication and language well. Children communicate confidently within the pre-school. During a practice for the end of term rehearsal, children stand up and speak clearly in front of other children and retell familiar stories. Staff support communication well. They use a range of well thought out comments, such as; 'I don't know how to do that,' to encourage children to think about what they are doing and explain their thinking to staff. Staff liaise with speech and language therapy to plan appropriate interventions for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, they organise additional support and use mirrors to help children make eye contact. As a result, children make good progress in communication. There are a range of opportunities planned to enable children to develop their physical skills. Children learn how to use scissors and garden tools safely. They build, construct and climb using a range of open-ended materials. Children make good progress in their literacy. They enjoy looking at books and some children demonstrate very good reading skills as they read some words and use phonic knowledge to blend other words. Staff also demonstrate a good understanding of how to promote early writing. They plan a range of activities, such as painting on walls, digging or pouring water into pipes to support early writing development. Writing materials are freely available inside, which children use with good control. They hold a pencil correctly to write their name or draw more complex figures. However, there is scope to enhance this provision further, by increasing the range of mark-making opportunities available in the outdoor environment. Staff have thought carefully about how they help children to learn about other cultures and they use parents as a key resource. An example of this is when parents come into the pre-school to read stories in French. This helps children to learn about other cultures within their own experiences.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The manager and her staff place a high priority on children's well-being. Children are extremely happy and settled in the pre-school and they have a good relationship with their key person and other staff. Parents comment that their children thrive because of the care they receive while in the pre-school. This means that children are emotionally secure. Children settle into the pre-school quickly because there are good settling-in procedures. Children come for visits and then they start in smaller groups, which helps them to get to know each other and their key person. In addition, staff find out important information from parents on entry, including children's interests and where they are in their learning. Staff have also thought about how they can prepare children for school. They talk to the children about the teachers in school as they see them in the yard. Children also visit school to watch different performances and the manager has recently arranged for staff from school to visit children in the pre-school. In addition, staff from the pre-school and the school meet together to talk about children's learning and likes and dislikes before they start school. This enables school staff to build up a picture of children's individual needs.

Children play in a well-organised environment both indoors and outdoors, which has been thoughtfully arranged with open-ended materials. Resources are easily accessible. This enables children to select their own resources independently. Displays in the pre-school recognise children's achievements as they celebrate recent achievements. Children are able to choose whether they wish to play indoors or outdoors. Many children play outdoors for extended periods of time. The space is thoughtfully organised with plenty of natural materials, which generally reflect the seven areas of learning. This means that children benefit from fresh air, but still have the opportunity to be quiet and restful outdoors too as they look at books or explore how water moves through a pipe. Children learn about healthy lifestyles and demonstrates a good understanding of health and hygiene as they wash hands before snack. They know how some foods, such as fruit, are good for them at snack time. Staff place a high priority on independence, which is promoted throughout the session as children are encouraged to put on their wellington boots or change back into their shoes after playing outside.

Children have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe as they learn how to leave the building in an emergency because they practise the fire evacuation regularly. They learn how to handle equipment, such as scissors and construction materials safely. Children behave well because they are highly engaged in their learning. They demonstrate a good understanding of the behavioural expectations. Staff work with parents and school staff to ensure that children benefit from consistent expectations at home, in the pre-school and in school. This prepares children effectively for school. Children play with each other extremely well. They ask for resources and work together to negotiate solutions to problems. This means that children are able to take turns, share resources and take account of the needs of others as they play.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager has a good understanding of her responsibilities in meeting the welfare, and learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager and staff have a robust understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Staff have recently updated their safeguarding certificates. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child. They understand the importance of working with other professionals and parents, in order to support children and their families. Policies and procedures are all very well written and organised. They are developed as a staff team and are known and understood by all staff and parents. There is rigorous security in place for entry to the pre-school and all gates and doors are secure. This ensures that only authorised visitors are able to enter the premises. Children and visitors are also signed in and out of the pre-school. In addition, daily risk assessments ensure all the areas of the pre-school are checked and hazards identified. There are rigorous recruitment and induction procedures in place, which ensures that all staff have appropriate suitability checks carried out.

The manager has a very good overview of the pre-school. She monitors assessments, so that she can highlight any gaps in achievement and plan appropriate interventions. She takes prompt action to overcome any gaps in provision. For example, she has implemented daily phonics sessions and a weekly home lending library to improve literacy. Staff have regular supervision meetings where they discuss their strengths and highlight training needs, which are linked to the improvement plan of the pre-school. A member of staff with an early years degree ensures that children benefit from broad and balanced curriculum. The manager observes and monitors the quality of teaching and learning throughout the session. This enables her to accurately identify aspects of their provision, where improvement is needed. Self-evaluation is good because the manager and staff identify what they do well and how they help children learn. They have a detailed self-evaluation, which takes into account the views of parents and children. Staff welcome the support from the local authority and act on the advice given, ensuring that they improve further. The manager monitors staff performance and regular supervision identifies any training priorities, so that staff continually improve their practice, which means that children make the best possible progress.

Partnerships with parents are very good as staff do a verbal handover at the beginning and end of the day. Parents comment that their children are very happy in the pre-school and they have made good progress. Staff have an open-door policy and parents are welcomed into the pre-school to play alongside their children. They have a good partnership with other providers. Staff are proactive in developing links with local schools and invite schools to visit the children in the pre-school. They also work effectively with other professionals, in order to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They talk to speech and language therapists about how they can support the children in their care more effectively. This demonstrates the staff's commitment to working with other professionals to support children's learning effectively.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	301168
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	867299
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	19
Number of children on roll	39
Name of provider	Mowden Pre-School Group Committee
Date of previous inspection	02/12/2008
Telephone number	07812429563School01325 460933

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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