

Cowdown Day Nursery

Cowdown Farm House, Cowdown Lane, Andover, Hampshire, SP11 6LE



Inspection date

17 February 2015

Previous inspection date

4 April 2014

	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
The quality and standards of the early years provision	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Requires improvement	3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Requires improvement	3
The setting does not meet legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- The quality of teaching and learning across all age groups is not consistently good. Planning does not consistently match children's needs because not all staff have a secure enough knowledge of age- and stage-appropriate activities, particularly for one-year-olds and those children with specific needs.
- Not all staff are skilled in promoting children's early communication skills because there is sometimes a lack of purposeful adult interaction during routines and children's freely chosen play. As a result, not all children are progressing well enough in their vital skills for their future learning.
- Furniture and the learning environment in the base room for one-year-old children do not effectively meet their developmental needs.
- The supervision, coaching and mentoring of staff are not highly successful.

It has the following strengths

- Children across the nursery build good relationships with their key person. They feel emotionally secure, are confident and staff meet their care needs well. This is particularly evident in the baby room.
- Relationships and communication with parents is strong. The manager provides a flexible, unique service to the parents, driving the nursery minibuss to a local access point to collect and drop off children.
- Management and staff are committed to safeguarding children. They understand the steps to take to protect children because it is part of every member of staff's induction.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure all staff are fully knowledgeable about how to implement individual children's learning aims, and plan activities and the learning environment, to effectively meet the age and stage of each child
- improve staff knowledge and skills, so all children are successfully supported in developing good communication and language skills.

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

- continue to evaluate and develop supervision, coaching and peer mentoring, to raise the quality of teaching and learning across the nursery.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the children's play activities indoors and outside, including some group activities, and looked at the available resources and relevant documentation.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager about their leadership and management, including their evaluation methods, and how they assess children's progress and the quality of teaching.
- The inspector spoke to a small selection of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.

Inspector

Lorraine Wardlaw

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This requires improvement

Children make steady developmental progress, but the quality of teaching across the staff team is variable. Two-year-old children were fully engaged in the well-planned story and song time. Staff skilfully used a puppet book and pictures of favourite songs, which excited children, keeping them focused and learning. Pre-school staff build on child-led play in the sand to introduce letters, mark making and sounds of words promoting literacy. Although staff support the youngest babies well in their key physical and communication skills, there is less focus on developing older babies' emerging language skills. For example, staff do not clearly emphasise and repeat the everyday words they want babies to learn in the hand-washing routine or outside in the garden. Inappropriate planned themes on the alphabet or Disney do not take account of babies' stage and young age. Staff are not sure of the targeted teaching aims for children with specific needs. Play resources, furniture and organisation of learning activities in the room for one-year-olds do not effectively meet their needs. However, there is access to the other better, richer and inviting play areas at designated times throughout the day, when they play alongside older siblings.

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

Each key person has a secure knowledge of their role and ensure they fully support children's health and well-being. The verbal handover between parents is consistently good across the staff team. Babies and children settle well and are very happy because of the flexible settling-in process and the information staff receive on children's individual care. Staff closely follow babies' home care and sleep routines to promote good health. All children take part in regular play in the large garden or the courtyard, gaining fresh air and exercise. Non-walkers are making strides in their physical skills because of the new furniture and handrails in their base room. They enjoy the challenges and particularly the uneven surfaces in the garden, toddling around in all-weather suits and wellies. Children feel safe and secure, and staff make sure they risk assess and minimise accidents through child supervision.

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

The management team show a commitment to evaluation and improvement. Since the last inspection, they have addressed some weaknesses of the setting, but their work is ongoing. The informal systems for staff supervision and coaching are beginning to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Some training has been identified and booked, such as 'Observation, assessment and planning', but other staff training needs, such as 'Every child a talker' have not been prioritised. Management is starting to track children's progress towards the early learning goals. Some partnerships with external professionals and other providers are established.

Setting details

Unique reference number	507866
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	982958
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	33
Name of provider	Cowdown Nursery Ltd
Date of previous inspection	4 April 2014
Telephone number	01264 363098

Cowdown Day Nursery opened in 1996 and registered with Ofsted in 2001. It operates from within the grounds of the provider's home in a converted farmhouse on the outskirts of Andover, Hampshire. Children have access to an enclosed garden. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years. The nursery operates from 8am to 6pm each weekday for 50 weeks of the year. A total of 11 staff are employed to work with the children, of whom nine hold appropriate early years qualifications.

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