



Dacre Banks Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400261
Inspection date	21 November 2006
Inspector	Mandy Black
Setting Address	Dacre and Hartwith Village Hall, Dacre Banks, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 4EN
Telephone number	07875283281
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Registered person	Dacre Banks Pre School Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Dacre Banks Pre-School Playgroup opened approximately 40 years ago and became a committee run group in April 1999. It is located at the village hall in the rural village of Dacre Banks, near Harrogate and has sole use of the premises when in operation. The group serves the local and surrounding areas.

The group is registered to provide sessional care for 24 children aged between two and five years. There are currently 35 children on roll, which includes 20 children in receipt of nursery education funding. The group does not currently support any children with learning difficulties or disabilities, and there are no children on roll who speak English as an additional language. Sessions are from 09.30 to 12.00 from Monday to Friday during school term time only. The group closes for two additional weeks, one during Spring and one during Autumn term.

There are five permanent members of staff working with the children, of which two are qualified and another is working towards a recognised early years qualification. There are also seven members of supply staff, of which two are appropriately qualified. A minimum of two qualified staff are present at each session. The group receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children participate in worthwhile physical activity each session. The use of the adjoining hall provides children with regular opportunities to practise and refine a range of physical skills, using a variety of equipment. These include bean bags, skittles, hop-scotch, wheeled toys and a climbing frame. Children demonstrate precise skills and excellent control using pencils, sticky tape, scissors, glue sticks and small pieces of collage materials, as they access their mark making and creative areas.

Children are well supported to stay healthy because staff implement a sickness policy that is shared effectively with parents. In addition, a partnership agreement is signed and parents agree to keep sick children at home, inform staff of infections and only provide prescribed medication with written authorisation for staff to administer. Accidents are promptly and correctly recorded, and the nature and frequency of accidents regularly analysed to highlight areas of concern. All these measures work well in practice and thoroughly protect children's health and well-being.

Children are actively encouraged and assisted by staff to wash their hands well after using the toilet and prior to eating their snack. Children show a good awareness of healthy practices. For example, they know and tell staff that they wash their hands 'to get the germs off'. They receive a suitable range of wholesome snacks which positively support their good health, such as chopped, fresh fruit. They also enjoy new and different foods like mashed sweet potato, which links to their American Thanksgiving theme. Children carefully help themselves to drinks of water or milk from small jugs, and fresh drinking water is freely available throughout the session.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment, with bright, educational displays and clear areas of play, with easily accessible equipment in labelled trays and boxes. A broad and balanced range of suitable resources are available and are regularly rotated to provide variety for the children.

High priority is given to children's safety, for example, the main door is monitored extremely well as children arrive and depart. The identity of visitors is thoroughly checked and signing-in procedures are well implemented by all staff. There are secure procedures in place to protect children when parents give authority for others to collect them, which includes signing the book and providing a secret password. Children's safety is well considered when taking children

on outings. For example, parental support often helps to achieve a one adult to two children ratio, although normal ratios apply if outings take place away from roads or other major hazards.

Staff regularly mop the floor next to the water play to minimise risk and children fully understand that this is to stop them slipping over. Although the use of the adjoining hall provides children with the freedom to run about and move to music, it is not always effectively supervised or monitored to keep children safe. For example, accidents are caused by children running into each other and the stacks of adult-size chairs are a potential hazard.

Children are well protected because staff are secure in their knowledge and understanding of their child protection policy. They are clear about the importance of recording concerns and following appropriate procedures when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem due to the warm interaction from staff. Plenty of praise and encouragement results in relaxed and comfortable relationships. Children are well occupied and interested in what they are doing, such as really enjoying bathing and drying their dolls, and carefully burying their little dinosaurs in the sand trays. They play and work cooperatively at the workbenches and carefully hang up the dolls' clothes together to dry.

Children ask questions freely and converse easily with staff and their peers. For example, they talk about when they had a pumpkin at home during Halloween, they ask if they can use the computer or ask for help with putting on the dolls' clothes. Children develop new knowledge and skills and successfully respond to challenges as they work together to decide how to build the highest tower with the bricks, without it falling down.

Staff are gaining a good awareness of the aspects and approach outlined in the 'Birth to three' framework and are beginning to use this to plan effectively for the younger children attending.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Key staff are developing a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage, with good support from the registered person and the local authority. Their planning shows clear links to the stepping stones over time, although children's assessment files do not show children's starting points, their progress towards the early learning goals, and do not highlight any differentiation or challenge for more or less able children. Staff explain activities clearly, they invite contributions from the children and ask for their opinions, for example, as they talk about a pumpkin and how they will make it into pumpkin soup. They continually extend children's learning and encourage them to make decisions in their discussions with them, such as asking them what they think they should do with the tape measure and why it is important to be kind to other children.

Children confidently approach adults for support and address them by their names. They are involved in activities for extended periods, such as colouring in American flags and helping to

create a flag collage. They can easily manage a range of tasks independently, for example, washing their hands, pouring their own drinks at snack time and putting on aprons for water play. Children are able to show a strong sense of self as they tell others about the traditions of their own family at Thanksgiving. They demonstrate a wide vocabulary as they talk in imaginary play situations. For example, as they care for the dolls or make dinner in the role play area. They also talk animatedly at snack time and discuss the new and interesting food they are eating, such as sweet potato and pumpkin soup.

Some children are familiar with letter sounds and can recognise the initial letters in their names. They easily recognise their name cards on arrival and individually labelled mats at snack time. Children make free choices from the comfortable, well-resourced book area, they handle books carefully, sharing them with friends as they 'read' to each other, following the print with their fingers. Children count frequently and think about simple number problems in their everyday activities. For example, they count the children present at circle time and discuss how many buns remain as they sing 'Five Currant Buns'. They show a good knowledge of shapes and correctly identify triangles and squares as they cut fabric and paper. Children demonstrate a sound awareness of size language as they cut tiny and long pieces of wool and measure each other with an extendable tape measure to see who is the tallest. They are very enthusiastic about technology, are confident when using the laptop computer and enjoy taking photographs of each other with the digital camera.

Children are able to correctly name dinosaurs, such as diplodocus and stegosaurus, as they hide them in the sand, but do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about where they live and the natural world. Children are able to express their own creativity very well as they access free painting and use the resources at the mark making table to make very individual pictures and cards. They enjoy the different sounds of musical instruments and learn successfully how to make loud and soft sounds. Children introduce amusing narrative into their play as they pretend to be the parents, bathing their babies with great care and tenderness.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

A very warm and friendly welcome to all helps support a strong sense of belonging for parents and children alike. Excellent relationships are established with parents which ensures that children's individual needs are well met. This includes very good verbal communications, questionnaires and a detailed partnership agreement. A complaints record has been introduced in line with the amended regulation in the National Standards.

Partnership with parents and carers in regard to the provision of nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive detailed written information about the areas of learning in a leaflet and also in their welcome booklet. Although parents have free and unlimited access to their children's assessment files, they are still being developed and do not clearly show children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are actively involved in the themes within the group, they contribute items and are able to effectively support children's learning at home.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about American celebrations and traditions, such as Thanksgiving and Independence Day, through their close involvement with the children and

families from the United States, who are part of their group. Children behave well and demonstrate a secure understanding of responsible behaviour. Staff work to their policy and manage any more challenging behaviour extremely positively and consistently, liaising with parents for a consistent approach when needed. The environment supports children's choices and promotes independence, as they can see clearly what is available and often help themselves from the labelled trays and low shelving. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff show a good commitment to personal development and continual improvement which has a positive impact on the outcomes for children. Robust vetting procedures are in place and the registered person ensures all adults working with children are appropriately vetted. Ratios are well met and staff are successfully deployed so that children are usually effectively supervised. Documentation is all in perfect order and fully meets all mandatory requirements, which positively supports children's care and well-being. Policies and procedures are an accurate reflection of the practice observed; staff are clearly very familiar with them and this also ensures that outcomes for children are successful.

Leadership and management, in relation to the provision of nursery education, is satisfactory. The registered person and her co-chair are strong leaders and form part of a very supportive and encouraging voluntary parent management committee. They are fully aware of the importance of ongoing training and the registered person is able to support staff effectively with curriculum planning, although there are still some areas of weakness which are currently being developed.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the improvements made to positively support children's care and well-being include procedures to protect staff members in the event of a child protection allegation, and the addition of Ofsted details on the complaints procedure.

The majority of recommendations made to improve the quality of children's nursery education have been well addressed. Children have regular opportunities to learn about problem solving and calculating in their daily routines, and the programme for physical development, to build on existing skills and develop new ones, is full and varied. Parents receive good quality information about the educational curriculum but the process of assessing children is an ongoing recommendation.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

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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):

- ensure that indoor physical play sessions are effectively supervised and monitored to keep children safe.

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):

- develop opportunities for children to gain an understanding of where they live and the natural world
- develop systems of planning to highlight differentiation for more and less able children, and assessment to show children's starting points and how individual children are making progress towards the early learning goals
- continue to develop systems to keep parents well informed about their children's progress
- continue to develop and address strengths and weaknesses in the educational curriculum.

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