

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 29 JULY 2009

REPORT ON: CARE COMMISSION INSPECTION OF DOWNFIELD EARLY YEARS CENTRE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 377-2009

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to report on the findings of the Care Commission Inspection of Downfield Early Years Centre.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

- i) notes the contents of this report; and
- ii) instructs the Director of Education to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement contained in the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Downfield Early Years Centre was subject to an unannounced inspection by the Care Commission in February 2009. They published a report on their findings on 2nd March 2009.

4.2 The Care Commission identified the following key strengths of the school:

- self evaluation documentation
- caring and supportive staff
- accommodation
- resources

4.3 Evaluations

4.3.1 The following was identified as a requirement for improvement:

- service must provide facilities where personal care is provided encompassing the principles of dignity and privacy.

4.3.2 The following were identified as recommendations for improvement:

- the nursery should consider developing a written participation strategy which clarifies how parents and carers can participate in assessing and improving the quality of service offered by the nursery

- staff needed to make more use of information gathered from observations and assessments to improve the quality of learning experiences and ensure appropriate challenge for children
- staff should develop an area within the nursery where children could rest
- the service provider should consider how staff evidence then record their daily visual risk assessments for the nursery room and outdoor play areas
- management should ensure that staff have the confidence to be flexible within children's' routines. For example children should be able to access the outdoor play area on an ongoing basis and not be restricted to short periods throughout the day
- the service should develop systems to routinely incorporate the views of service users and other stakeholders into the evaluation and development of the service.

4.4 Quality Indicators

4.4.1 The Care Commission use a six-point scale for reporting performance:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

4.4.2 The following themes from "*National Care Standards - Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16*" were evaluated:

Theme/Quality Statement	Evaluation
Quality of Care and Support (Quality statement 1.1): We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of care and support provided by the service.	Good
Quality of Care and Support (Quality statement 1.3) We ensure that service users health and wellbeing needs are met.	Good
Quality of Environment (Quality statement 2.1) We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the environment within the service.	Good

Theme/Quality Statement	Evaluation
<p>Quality of Environment (Quality Statement 2.3)</p> <p>The environment allows service users to have as positive a quality of life as possible.</p>	Good
<p>Quality of Staffing (Quality Statement 3.1)</p> <p>We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.</p>	Good
<p>Quality of Staffing (Quality statement 3.3)</p> <p>We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.</p>	Good
<p>Quality of Management Leadership (Quality statement 4.1)</p> <p>We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.</p>	Adequate
<p>Quality of Management and Leadership (Quality statement 4.4)</p> <p>We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide.</p>	Adequate

- 4.5 The requirement as indicated in 4.3.1 has been overtaken by the authority and the centre. The recommendations as indicated in 4.3.2 are included in the Downfield Primary School Improvement Plan (2009-2012). These will be reviewed, monitored and evaluated in line with both the school and authority quality improvement calendar.
- 4.6 In line with Care Commission regulations the centre will be subject to a further inspection within 12 months of the original visit. As a result of the return visit a further report on the improvements to the quality of provision will be published to parents. In June 2009 Downfield Primary School and Nursery Class was subject to inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). The outcomes of that inspection when published will form the basis of a report to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been screened for any implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environment Assessment, Anti-Poverty and Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

5.2 There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Head of Finance.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 The following Background Papers were relied upon in preparation of this Report:

- Care Commission Inspection of Downfield Early Years Centre 2nd March 2009

JIM COLLINS
Director of Education

14 July 2009

JC/LW



Inspection report

Downfield Early Years Centre Day Care of Children

20 Haldane Crescent
Dundee DD3 0JP

Inspected by: Patricia Mackay
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 23 February 2009

Service Number

CS2003015787

Service name

Downfield Early Years Centre

Service address20 Haldane Crescent
Dundee DD3 0JP**Provider Number**

SP2003004034

Provider Name

Dundee City Council

Inspected ByPatricia Mackay
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Unannounced

Inspection Completed

23 February 2009

Period since last inspection

This was the first inspection of this nursery

Local Office AddressCentral East
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Introduction

Downfield Primary School Nursery Class was registered with the Care Commission in 2008. The service is registered to accommodate a maximum of 50 children between the ages of three years to those not yet attending primary school. The nursery offers part-time places both morning and afternoon sessions, in addition to full time places and a wraparound service.

Downfield is a newly built primary school which now incorporates Downfield Early Years Centre which was formerly Kirkton Nursery School.

Externally there was a large fully enclosed outdoor play area providing excellent play opportunities for children.

Internally, the accommodation provided open plan play areas for children, and the addition a smaller quiet room. There were cloakroom and toilet facilities available for children's use.

All areas to which children have access were bright, and child centred

Based on the findings of this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support - 4 - Good

Quality of Environment - 4 - Good

Quality of Staffing - 4 - Good

Quality of Management and Leadership - 3 - Adequate

This inspection report and grades represent the Care Commission's assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. Please refer to the care services register on the Care Commission's website (www.carecommission.com) for the most up-to-date grades for this service.

Basis of Report

This report was written following an unannounced inspection was carried out by two Care Commission officers (CCO's) and took place over one morning on 23rd February, 2009.

Before the inspection:

§ The service submitted an Annual Return.

§ The service submitted a self assessment form.

§ 14 out of possible 30 Care Commission questionnaires were completed by parents or carers using the service.

This service was inspected after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of inspection necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the Care Commission Officer (CCO) which considers: complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service (such as absence of manager) and action taken upon requirement. The CCO will also have considered how the service responded to situations and issues as part of the RSA.

This assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required as a result.

The inspection was then based upon specific statements within the four quality themes and included the relevant inspection focus areas and follow up on any recommendations and requirements from previous inspections, complaints or other regulatory activity.

During the inspection, evidence was gathered from a number of sources including:
A review of a range of policies, procedures, records and other documentation, including the following:

- § Children's information details
- § Some written recoding sheets

Discussions took place with staff members and most of the time spent in the nursery was spent observing how staff interacted with children. The Care Commission Officers considered the general environment and equipment used in the provision of the service.

The CCOs took all of the above into account and reported on whether the service was meeting specific aspects of the following quality themes derived from the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:

- § Quality of Care and Support
- § Quality of Environment
- § Quality of Staffing
- § Quality of Management and Leadership.

In accordance with Care Commission policy for 2007-8 the focus of the inspection was therefore on key themes relating to:

- § Child Protection.
- § Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) training and development plans.

Inspection Focus Areas and links to Quality Themes and Statements for 2008/09
Details of the inspection focus and associated Quality Themes to be used in inspecting each type of care service in 2008/09 and supporting inspection guidance, can be found at:
<http://www.carecommission.com>

Fire Safety Issues

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in respect of fire safety, on 1 October 2006. In terms of those arrangements, responsibility for enforcing the statutory provisions in relation to fire safety now lies with the Fire and Rescue service for the area in which a care service is located. Accordingly, the Care Commission will no longer report on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function, but, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Further advice on your responsibilities is available at www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

Action taken on requirements since last inspection

This was the first inspection of this new service.

Comments on Self Assessment

A fully completed self-assessment document was submitted by the service. This was completed to a good standard and gave relevant information for each of the Quality Themes and Statements. The Head Teacher (HT) identified the strengths of the nursery and some

areas for future development.

View of Service Users

On the day of the inspection, children from a range of pre-school ages were observed by Care Commission Officers. Some children were seen to be active, and some engaged in a range of activities provided for them.

View of Carers

14 out of 30 parents or carers completed the Care Commission questionnaires prior to the inspection. A very good level of satisfaction was expressed by most parents who used the service. A few parents made written comments and some are detailed below. These included :

"As the service has just moved into a new building and my child was attending the last service, I feel that the staff have made this move more smooth running and have been very quick at settling the service back up and running without any disruption to my child's needs."

"Very happy with all nursery staff"

" I am happy and I can see that my child is also very happy"

"Lots of info about the school, not much about the nursery. It would be nice if parents were invited to spend sometime in the nursery to observe children, there are no outings planned that I am aware and I don't have any idea what happened on a daily basis during nursery sessions."

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 4 - Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service Strengths

Not all aspects of this quality statement were evaluated. Having sampled evidence given by the centre in the self-evaluation of the service, a review of some documentation and observations of outcomes for children relating to how service users and carers participated in assessing and improving the care and support provided by them, this service was found to have a good performance in relation to this statement.

Some methods were noted which they believed ensured that parents and carers were involved and had an impact on the centre. These included information given to parents and carers about their children through informal daily discussions on a daily basis. Individual profiles were being completed for each child and maintained by staff. However some of these were viewed as being at an early stage of development. Within the Care Commission questionnaire most parents either agreed or strongly agreed that the nursery shared information regarding their child with them.

The nursery stated that they were in the process of reviewing and developing specific information about the nursery for parents.

Some methods were being used by staff to elicit children's views within a culture of consultation. Opinions were seen to be occasionally sought verbally but there was limited supporting written evidence seen on the morning of inspection. Small group time was observed and it was noted that although many children appeared engaged that there they were limited opportunities for discussion.

Areas for Development

Following discussion with the head teacher and deputy head teacher, and a review of some documentation relating to children parents and carers participation in assessing and improving the quality of care and support, evidence was found to be at an early stage of implementation.

The service's strategy of self assessment had included some methods of participation but most of these had not yet been put into practice to the extent where there was a significant impact on the service. The service could further improve its approach to enabling children and parents and carers to participate in assessing and improving the quality of care and support in the nursery by developing a participation strategy which clarifies how they can be involved in this process, and how the nursery will use this input to develop and improve the service. See Recommendation 1.

Staff needed to make more use of information gathered from observations to improve the quality of learning experiences and ensure appropriate challenge for children. See Recommendation 2.

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

2

Statement 3: We ensure that service user's health and wellbeing needs are met.

Service Strengths

Not all aspects of this quality statement were evaluated. Having sampled evidence given by the head teacher in the self-evaluation of the service, a review of some documentation and observations, this service was found to have a good performance in relation to this statement.

The service noted a variety of methods being used to ensure that children's health and wellbeing needs were being met. These included Dundee City Council's policy and practice in the areas of healthy eating, tooth brushing, active play, infection control, child protection and planning for children using current childcare guidance.

Healthy eating was promoted in the nursery and children enjoyed the snack on offer with range finger foods. All parents who responded to the Care Commission Questionnaire were either happy or very happy regarding their child's diet in the nursery.

The nursery demonstrated a good understanding to the importance of active play outdoors. Most of the children were seen to access the outdoor area throughout the day for extended periods of time. The children were observed to be very happy in this area and enjoyed the freedom and fresh air it provided as well as the chance to access and choose a number of physical outside resources. From the Care Commission's parent questionnaires, when asked, does your child have regular access to fresh air and energetic physical play, all parents agreed.

There was evidence to support the service's approach to child protection matters. Staff had an understanding of their roles and knew to direct concerns to the designated child protection officer within the school. All had participated in child protection training.

Areas for Development

Staff used the children's toilet area to administer personal intimate care despite having the appropriate changing facilities in a room nearby. See Requirement 1.

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

1

Number of Recommendations

2

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 4 - Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the environment within the service.

Service Strengths

Following discussion with the centre staff, and observations of outcomes for children relating to how the centre ensured that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the environment, this service was found to have a good performance in relation to this statement.

It was observed that the nursery's indoor resources were arranged in a way which children could access them. Most children had an understanding of the routines which allowed for them some choice within the indoor activities. Painting was popular, and many children enjoyed dressing up with the many quality play clothes available.

Children enjoyed the time spent outdoors, and the play areas were inviting and stimulating. They were seen to be happy and played well with each other.

Areas for Development

Following discussion with the head teacher and deputy head teacher a review of the documentation relating to parents and carers participation in assessing and improving the quality of the nursery environment, evidence was found to be at an early stage of implementation. See Recommendation 1.

The management team should encourage staff to take less of a lead role with activities, allowing children additional choices.

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Statement 3: The environment allows service users to have as positive a quality of life as possible.

Service Strengths

Following discussion with the nursery staff, a sample of the documentation and observations of outcomes for children this service was found to have a very good performance in relation to this statement.

The service noted a variety of methods being used to ensure that the centre environment was safe and service users protected.

The nursery was observed to be clean and in a good state of repair and there was good ventilation, heating and plenty of natural light. A good range of table top displays encouraged discussion with children. Staff spoke quietly and re-assuringly to children many of whom had only fairly recently begun attending nursery.

Resources were plentiful and allowed for the development of the children's imagination, fine and gross motor skills in addition to development of their social and emotional skills. Resources were well stored for easy access.

Areas for Development

Downfield is a new school and as a result much time has been spent on the development of the service. The management team have identified their need to further involve all aspects of the local community and form key partnerships with the local community in the development of the nursery.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 4 - Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

Service Strengths

Following discussion with staff, a sample of the documentation and observations of outcomes for children this service was found to have a good performance in relation to this statement. The nursery having been recently established has had a limited amount of time to consult directly with parents regarding staffing in the nursery. This will be considered in more depth as the service develops.

Staff were observed as being caring and supportive to children on the morning of the inspection, and interacted with appropriately throughout the observed session. Within the Care Commission Questionnaire parents were happy that their children interacted well with staff, and that staff treated them fairly and with respect.

Areas for Development

The nursery could further develop its approach to involving service users in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service by developing a participation strategy as described under QS 1.1 See Recommendation 1.

The service should promote training for staff in terms of developing positive models of service user and carer participation. This will further increase their awareness of their roles for ensuring the effective delivery of service user and carer involvement and help to ensure that participation was meaningful.

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Statement 3: We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.

Service Strengths

Following discussion with staff and a review of the documentation relating to the workforce the service was found to have a very good performance in relation to this statement.

All staff were appropriately qualified and the skills mix of the centre teacher and early childhood practitioners appeared to compliment each another within the nursery.

All staff benefited from in-house training as well as participating in the council programme of training opportunities.

Areas for Development

None Identified.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 3 - Adequate

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service Strengths

Following discussion with staff and a review of a sample of the documentation relating to how the nursery ensured that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of management the nursery the service was found to have an adequate performance in relation to this quality statement. The nursery having been recently established has had a limited amount of time to consult directly with parents regarding the quality of management and leadership within the nursery. This will be considered in more depth as the service develops.

Notice boards in the entrance kept parents informed of the daily plans and of the week's snack menu. Additional information for parents includes certificate of registration, staff names and photographs.

The nursery staff stated that they reflected on practice as they talked to parents at the end of each session.

Areas for Development

Further development was needed to show how parent involvement had an impact on the improvement of the service's leadership and management. See Recommendation 1.

The nursery could further inform parents of daily activities by writing up a daily information board for parents, and displaying photographs which had been taken in that session, perhaps within a digital photo frame.

CCO Grading

3 - Adequate

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Statement 4: We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide.

Service Strengths

Following discussion with staff and a sample of the documentation relating to how the centre ensured that service users and carers participate in assessing the quality of the centre, this service was found to have an adequate performance in relation to this statement.

The Head Teacher and her deputy were keen to embrace ideas and suggestions made to them in order to make improvements in the nursery. Both had identified areas for improvement which they needed to carry forward, however due to the length of time which the service had been operating, these were at an early stage of development.

The service had available to it a comprehensive external Quality Assurance structure. This would include whole school parental surveys and an external Quality Assurance report. However as this was a new school these had not yet taken place. The Head Teacher reported that she met regularly with the nursery teacher and the deputy head teacher, in addition to time spent by both in the nursery.

The early childhood practitioners were either in the process of registering with the Scottish Social Services Council or had already done so, and the Head Teacher was aware of the responsibility in relation to reporting misconduct to this body.

The service had available to it a comprehensive external Quality Assurance structure. This would include whole school parental surveys and an external Quality Assurance report. However as this was a new school no formal external evaluations had not yet taken place.

Areas for Development

The service should begin to develop systems which evidence how it routinely incorporates the views of service users and other stakeholders into the evaluation of its work. See Recommendation 6.

Staff appeared, at times, hesitant regarding nursery routines. This may have been due to the short time that the nursery had been opened, and that they needed to make changes to their working practices within this new setting. Additional support from the management team would be beneficial.

CCO Grading

3 - Adequate

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards

Enforcement

There has been no enforcement action against this service since the last inspection.

Other Information

There was no other information.

Requirements

1. The service must ensure that when personal intimate care is being provided that it must encompass the principles of dignity and privacy. This is in order to comply with SSI 2002/114 Regulation 4 (a) and (b) - a requirement to make proper provision for the health and welfare of service users, and to provide a service in a manner which respects the privacy and dignity of service users. Timescale for implementation: Immediately from the receipt of this report.

Recommendations

1. The nursery should consider developing a written participation strategy which clarifies how parents and children can participate in assessing and improving the quality of the service offered by the nursery - National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the Age of 16 - Standard 13 - Improving the service

2. Staff needed to make more use of information gathered from observations and assessments to improve the quality of learning experiences and ensure appropriate challenge for children. Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 13 - Improving the service

3. Staff should develop an area within the nursery where children could rest.
Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 3.5 - Health and Wellbeing

4. The service provider should consider how staff evidence they record their daily visual risk assessments for the nursery rooms and the outdoor play areas. National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the Age of 16: Standard 2.2: A Safe Environment

5. Management should ensure that staff have the confidence to be flexible within children's routines. For example children should be able to access the outdoor play area on an ongoing basis and not be restricted to short periods throughout the day. National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 12.2: Confidence in staff

6. The service should develop systems to routinely incorporate the views of service users and other stakeholders into the evaluation and development of the service - Standard 13 - Improving the service

Patricia Mackay
Care Commission Officer