

Inspection report

Donaldson's School Nursery Day Care of Children

Preston Road
Linlithgow EH49 6HZ

Inspected by: Marilyn Simpson
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 5 February 2009

Service Number

CS2007160246

Service name

Donaldson's School Nursery

Service addressPreston Road
Linlithgow EH49 6HZ**Provider Number**

SP2003002649

Provider Name

Donaldson's Trust

Inspected ByMarilyn Simpson
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Unannounced

Inspection Completed

5 February 2009

Period since last inspection

First since Registration

Local Office AddressSouth East Region
Stuart House
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Introduction

Donaldson's School Nursery was registered with the Care Commission on 20 December 2007 following the move from their previous location in Edinburgh. The new purpose built premises are on a rural site situated on the outskirts of the town of Linlithgow. It is registered to provide a service to a maximum of 20 children aged 2.5 years to primary school age, at each session during the hours of 9:00am to 3:45pm Monday to Friday during term time only. The nursery class provides day care for children who are deaf and in some cases have additional associated complex difficulties and also for children who have no additional needs.

The nursery had an integrated inspection visit from HM Inspectorate of Education in January 2007.

The nursery class occupies an area within the school. The children had the use of a large playroom and adjacent cloakroom area. There was a fully equipped kitchen, within the playroom, for the preparation of snacks. On the day of the inspection visit the areas used by the children were bright, well lit and ventilated. The children had direct access from the playroom to a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The aims of the nursery class include:

To create a bilingual environment in which all pupils can have optimum access to a curriculum appropriate to their needs in line with the national requirements.

To provide a happy, friendly and caring environment, in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.

To provide a stimulating environment in which pupils have a variety of opportunities to enhance their social skills.

To work in partnership with parents and external professionals in order to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of each pupil.

To ensure that parents and visitors feel welcome in the nursery, recognising the value of their involvement and contribution.

To ensure that staff have access to appropriate continuing professional development opportunities to support their contribution to the provision of high quality learning and teaching.

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

Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good

Quality of Environment - 5 - Very Good

Quality of Staffing - 5 - Very Good

Quality of Management and Leadership - 5 - Very Good

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

Before the Inspection

The Annual Return

The service submitted a completed Annual Return as requested by the Care Commission.

The Self-Assessment Form

The service submitted a self-assessment form as requested by the Care Commission

Views of service users

Twelve Care Commission Care Standards Questionnaires were issued. However as the nursery has a small number of children attending not all questionnaires were issued to the parents/carers. Five questionnaires were received prior to the inspection visit.

Regulation Support Assessment

The inspection plan for this service was decided 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 a manager) and action taken upon requirements. The CCO will also have considered how the service responded to situations and issues as part of the RSA.

LOW

This assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required. The inspection was based on the relevant Inspection Focus Areas and associated National Care Standards, recommendations and requirements from previous inspections and complaints or other regulatory activity.

During the inspection process

Staff at inspection

This report was written following an unannounced visit on 5 February 2009 by Marilyn Simpson.

On the day of the inspection visit the Officer interviewed the head teacher and two nursery staff.

Evidence

Certificate of Registration

Public Liability Insurance

Children's files

Staff training records

Attendance Register

Child protection policy and records

Quality Assurance systems

Minutes of staff meetings

Improvement plan

Medication records

Accident/Incident records
Risk assessments
Information handbook
Observation of premises, toys and equipment available.

The Officer took all of the above into account and reported on whether the service was meeting specific statements of the following Quality Themes derived from the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:

1. Quality of Care and Support - Quality Statements 1:1 & 1:3
2. Quality of Environment - Quality Statements 2:1 & 2:3
3. Quality of Staffing - Quality Statements 3:1 & 3:3
4. Quality of Management and Leadership - Quality Statements 4:1 & 4:4

The inspection also took into account the Regulation of Care Act (Scotland) 2001 and the Scottish Statutory Instrument 2002/114.

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

All issues had been addressed at the time of registration.

Comments on Self Assessment

The self assessment was comprehensively completed and detailed the strengths of the service and outlined some areas for improvement that have been reported on in this report.

View of Service Users

On the day of the inspection visit the Officer observed that the children were very focussed in their play and confidently approached staff with ideas and suggestions to extend activities. Children spoken to stated that they liked to paint and play outside.

View of Carers

Five parent/carer Care Standards Questionnaires were received and all stated that they strongly agreed that they were happy with the quality of the service. Comments included:

"I think the nursery is fantastic and (child) is always so happy in the nursery. The staff are so friendly and very easy to talk (communicate) with".

"Donaldson's is a centre of excellence where children are brought to life. My (child) has against all odds progressed well beyond expectation due to the commitment and passion of the staff".

"Donaldson's nursery provides an excellent education for under 5's, stimulating and well planned activities, trips to local facilities, good constructive play".

"The standard of care has been absolutely superb".

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very 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

There were very good opportunities for parents/carers to make comments that would improve the quality of care and support their child received. For example the nursery class had established a system for parents/carers to make suggestions through the school's web site, the parent's forum, a suggestion box and through the children's daily diaries. The nursery's parental involvement strategies encouraged parents/carers to be involved in the nursery through parents' evenings, fundraising events and as parent helpers on outings.

The nursery's robust enrolment and admissions procedures enabled parents/carers and children to make welcome visits to the nursery prior to the beginning of the placement. In addition staff were also informed of a child's requirements through a very informative "All about me" form and an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Staff provided very good opportunities for children to make contributions to improve the quality of the service through circle time, discussions with children verbally and signing and through skilful observations that informed their activity plans.

All of the parents/carers who responded to the Care Commission Care Standards questionnaires indicated that they strongly agreed that they were kept informed about what was happening in the nursery class. In addition the parent spoken to on the day of the inspection visit stated that they were aware of the parent's forum and how to feed suggestions into this group.

Areas for Development

The service identified the following areas for improvement:

To develop the parents/carers consultation forum (nursery) to work actively within the nursery, to use their strengths to influence practice, to continue to involve them in curricular developments.

The Care Commission Officer supports this development and identified the following area for improvement:

Consideration should be given to formally obtaining the views of parents/carers and children and evidence how this information would influence improvement in the quality of the service provided by the nursery class. (see Recommendation 1)

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

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

Service Strengths

The nursery class had very good systems in place to ensure the children's health and wellbeing needs were met. They had developed aims and objectives that outlined the service's intentions and were shared with parents/carers in the nursery's information leaflet.

Staff were very skilled in their interactions and were responsive to the individual needs of the children. They were observed to offer appropriate praise and encouragement to promote achievement and celebrate success. Due to the small number of children they had built up friendships with each other and were observed to be confident and contributed to the learning environment of the nursery. For example on the day of the inspection visit an older child was observed to assist a younger child with a painting activity. In addition the children made regular visits to the school and were involved in concerts and school assemblies. School children were observed to visit and play with the nursery children during school breaks.

Due to the complex medical needs of some of the children, staff worked very closely with the on site nurses and therapists. Children's therapy programmes were followed by staff and shared with parents/carers through an effective review process. Care routines were carefully followed and discussed with parents/carers. Staff were proactive in seeking information from parents/carers and used this to support children's individual care routines sensitively and according to their stage of development and needs.

Continuity of care was maintained by a very efficient key worker system and staff had established very positive relationships with the children. The programme of activities provided the children with a very balanced day that allowed for times of active and energetic play and for quieter activities. Children, who attended a full day, were provided with an opportunity to rest throughout the day in quiet areas within the playroom.

There were very good systems in place for ensuring the control of infection. There was an infection control policy and staff were observed to take account of this policy through hygienic changing routines and distribution of snacks. Children's health was further enhanced by the nursery's participation in the national tooth brushing scheme. There were robust systems in place for the administering, recording and storage of medication. In addition the school's bronze award as a Health Promoting School involved the nursery children.

Healthy meals were provided by the school's kitchen and children, where appropriate, were encouraged to make choices regarding different food tastes and textures. Staff held relevant food hygiene certificates and were observed to include the children in preparation of healthy snacks within the playroom.

The nursery had very good systems in place for the protection of children. The robust procedures included relevant key information about the service's responsibility regarding the

protection of children and there was a very effective system for recording child protection issues. The robust school policy took account of the "Area Child Protection Committee Child Protection Procedures". Staff demonstrated a very good knowledge of the procedures to follow and had received annual training regarding child protection. Copies of Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards and The Children's Charter were available for staff and were utilised in staff training. In addition staff were aware of their responsibilities regarding the use and recording of restraint and had been trained in the use of restraint techniques.

All parents/carers indicated in the Care Commission's Care Standards Questionnaires that they strongly agreed that staff would protect their child from harm.

Areas for Development

The service identified the following areas for improvement:

To develop a visual menu for parents/carers.

To work towards silver award.

The Care Commission Officer supports these developments and identified the following areas for improvement:

Although staff informally informed parents/carers of their responsibilities regarding the protection of children, they should consider alternative ways in which they can ensure that parents/carers are fully informed of these matters.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very 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

In addition to the strengths stated in 1:1 parents/carers had very good opportunities to improve the quality of the environment. There was evidence that parents/carers had been involved in the planning and development of the new facility with parent representatives on committees and regular updates regarding the progress of the new building issued to parents/carers. In addition on the day of the inspection visit the parent spoken with shared that parents were involved in interviews following the recent move.

There was evidence, through children's observations of their interests and their suggestions influencing the planning of activities. In addition parents/carers had been involved in nursery activities such as the recent burns supper when a parent played an accordion for the children.

In the Care Commission Care Standards Questionnaires all parent/carers indicated that the nursery was safe, secure, hygienic, pleasant and a stimulating environment.

Areas for Development

The service identified the following areas for improvement:

To continue to involve parents/carers in the decision making process within the nursery.

On the day of the inspection visit staff stated that the service was in the process of starting a parent/toddler group.

The Care Commission Officer supports these developments and identified the following area for improvement:

Consideration should be given to formally obtaining the views of parents/carers and children and evidence how this information would influence improvement in the quality of the care and support provided by the nursery class. (see Recommendation 1)

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

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

Service Strengths

The resources were of a very high quality and were effectively utilised by staff to further enhance children's development. Staff offered a very well-judged range of resources and experiences which were child centred and responsive to the children's needs, abilities and interests. Activities were stimulating and children clearly enjoyed participating in them individually and in small groups. Staff used the very impressive outdoor play area as an integral part of the children's learning. Children's art work was very attractively displayed and excellent use of photographs and the smart board evidenced the wide range of activities provided for the children in the nursery.

Resources were very well organised and effectively stored to enable staff to easily access themed and labelled topic boxes. Resources were robustly evaluated through activity evaluation, children's observations and profiles and the service evaluation. Staff were very knowledgeable about the variety of resources available and had a systematic approach for the assessment and disposal of broken or incomplete toys. The nursery had developed a robust inventory that was held electronically in house. In addition there was evidence that staff, children and parents/carers made suggestions and ideas in the acquisition of resources.

Staff displayed activities and toys effectively that encouraged children to have independent choice and made creative use of materials. The excellent interactive displays and interest tables provided additional learning for the children through reference books, environmental print and materials of interest.

Children made excellent use of the information and communication technology (ICT) through controlled computer internet access and the use of cameras to produce images on the smart board or on printed photographs.

The layout of the playroom was very welcoming, inviting, stimulating and allowed sufficient space for children to move freely between areas. Children had access to bright, attractively decorated play areas for snack, quiet play and messy play. In addition children had access to the extensive school grounds and gym hall for active and energetic play.

Staff had developed excellent links with the community that included visits to a local nursery, visit from the Fire Service and the nursery had been involved in the acquisition of funding from a local business to buy a large piece of equipment. Through the comprehensive notice boards parents/carers were informed of community events and information.

Areas for Development

The nursery should continue and maintain the excellent practice of providing an environment that promotes such a high quality experience for the children.

CCO Grading

6 - Excellent

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

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

Service Strengths

In addition to the strengths detailed in 1:1, the involvement of parents/carers in the nursery in improving the quality of staffing was very good. Through the very robust admission and review systems parents/carers were able to influence staff's training for example staff had attended training in order to meet medical needs of children. Staff worked very hard to involve parents/carers in their child's learning through a wide range of initiatives, such as children's daily diaries, regular newsletters, very informative notice boards, parents' evenings and the school's website. In addition parents/carers were involved in the recruitment and selection process of staff through membership of the Board of Governors, Staffing Committee.

In the Care Commission Care Standards Questionnaires all parents/carers indicated that they strongly agreed that staff treated their child fairly and with respect. The parent spoken to on the day of the inspection visit stated that staff were very approachable, supportive and felt very welcome in the nursery class.

Areas for Development

The service identified the following areas for improvement:

To develop the parents/carers consultation forum (nursery) to include issues surrounding staffing including recruitment and training.

The Care Commission Officer supports this development and identified the following area for improvement:

Consideration should be given to formally obtaining the views of parents/carers and children and evidence how this information would influence improvement in the quality of the service provided by the nursery class. (see Recommendation 1)

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

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

Service Strengths

There was a very robust staff development programme that took account of national priorities for learning, the nursery/school improvement plan, staff appraisals and staff's commitment to their continuous professional development. Staff had very good opportunities to attend in-house and external training events and to share best practice with colleagues in the primary department. Staff were involved in regular team meetings and their ideas and suggestions were used to inform the evaluation process for the nursery class.

Staff practice was regularly monitored by the head teacher and depute head teacher and constructive feedback ensured high standards were maintained. In addition the management team worked very closely with staff to monitor children's progress and learning experiences. Staff were exceptionally enthusiastic and committed to their involvement in the improvement of the nursery class and to the high-quality experiences offered to children in their care.

Staff were recruited following the service's recruitment and selection policy and procedure. There was evidence that nursery staff had a very good awareness of the school's child protection and whistle blowing policies and procedures.

Areas for Development

The service identified the following area for improvement:

Staff to continue to develop their skills through CPD courses, good practice and sharing practice.

The Care Commission Officer supports this development and identified the following areas for improvement:

Nursery staff should continue the registration process with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

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: 5 - Very Good

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

In addition to the strengths detailed in 1:1, there were very good opportunities for parents/carers to contribute to improving the quality of the service. The school's aims for working with parents indicated that management and staff were committed to providing opportunities for parents/carers to be actively involved in "decision making" within the school. In addition parents/carers who sat on the Board of Governors were involved in the improvement of the service. There was evidence that parents/carers were informed of the school's improvement plan and standard and quality report through the publication of the annual School Performance Review.

There were very robust systems in place for recording any complaints made against the nursery class. Parents/carers were informed of the service's complaints policy and procedure on the nursery notice board.

All the parents/carers who responded to the Care Commission Care Standards Questionnaires stated that they strongly agreed that the nursery class had involved them and their child in developing the service.

Areas for Development

The service identified the following areas for improvement:

The school/nursery will continue to provide opportunities for active parental involvement in school life and will focus on involving them in decision making.

The Care Commission Officer supports this development and identified the following areas for improvement:

Consideration should be given to formally obtaining the views of parents/carers and children and evidence how this information would influence improvement in the quality of the service provided by the nursery class. (see Recommendation 1)

Although parents/carers were informed of the nursery's procedures for addressing complaints, on the notice board, consideration could be given to including this procedure within the nursery class handbook.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

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

The nursery's approach to improvement through self-assessment was very good. There was evidence that the school had comprehensive quality assurance systems in place that included input from nursery staff through use of Child at the Centre and the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare. They were systematic in their approach to evidence gathering that included the management team working with staff to monitor children's progress and learning experiences, observation of staff's practice, team meetings and staff reviews. A very effective improvement plan, containing priorities which supported the continuing improvement in children's learning within the nursery class, was being implemented successfully.

The nursery class received further scrutiny from the Board of Governors quality assurance committee.

The management team provided excellent leadership. They were very enthusiastic and they had a clear vision that focused on providing children with the highest quality of education and care. They had fostered excellent teamwork and encouraged staff to develop initiatives and to lead improvements.

The head teacher was very knowledgeable of her responsibility to report disciplinary action taken against nursery staff to the Care Commission and if appropriate the Scottish Social Services Council.

Areas for Development

The service identified the following area for improvement:

To ensure that evidence gained from all quality assurance methods is used to improve the quality of care and learning experiences for our pupils.

The Care Commission Officer supports this development and identified the following areas for improvement:

Although the nursery obtained informal views of stakeholders through the review system, consideration should be given to evidencing these views and how they could influence further improvement of the service.

The nursery should continue with the systematic approach to evidence gathering, including the views of parents/carers and children, that would inform the evaluation process and priorities for improvement.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

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**Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that the service develops a formal system for parents/carers and children to make contributions that would influence further improvements within the nursery class. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 13: Improving the service.

Marilyn Simpson

Care Commission Officer