

# Snowdrops Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY348111
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 July 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Geneen Yvonne Hulse-Brown
<b>Setting Address</b>	Ashdell Preparatory School, 266-268 Fulwood Road, SHEFFIELD, S10 3BL
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<b>Registered person</b>	Ashdell Preparatory School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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](http://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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Snowdrops Pre-School was registered in 2007 and is situated in the Broomhill area of Sheffield at Ashdell Preparatory School. Children come from the local community and the wider area. There is a playroom, classroom, the studio for ballet, physical and music activities and secure outdoor play space for children's use, with access to toilets and storage space.

A maximum of 40 children aged two and a half to eight years may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, term time only and sessions are 08.15 to 17.30 and children attend for a variety of sessions. An optional breakfast club is offered from 07.45 and after school care until 17.30. There are currently 34 children on roll, of these, 30 receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and English as an additional language.

There are five staff employed to work with the children; of these three hold recognised early years qualifications and two are working towards qualifications. Additional specialist staff are employed to work with the children. The pre-school is managed by Ashdell Preparatory School

Council of Management. The setting receives support from the local authority Learning and Achievement Service.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children enthusiastically enjoy and undertake an extensive range of activities that contributes to keeping them healthy. They develop excellent physical skills as they effectively use outdoor activities to play and explore. Children confidently choose to play indoors or outdoors in all weathers, putting on waterproof clothing and helping themselves to umbrellas as needed. They confidently pedal bicycles, play chasing and ball games with relish. An outstanding aspect of the setting is that the door is always open for the children to in and out as they choose. Children confidently negotiate their way around the pre-school as they learn to move furniture with care and find a space to work and play. They are proactive in exploring their surroundings looking for bugs and twigs in the school grounds. Staff skilfully plan to take the indoors outside, for example, construction and mark making as part of everyday activities. However, the design of the outdoor area can on occasion limit children's opportunities to explore and experiment independently. The staff have identified the importance of further developing outdoor space to offer the children additional opportunities to extend the curriculum. Children confidently manipulate small tools, such as scissors, pencils, glue spreaders and paintbrushes as they successfully develop outstanding fine motor skills. They have fun making play dough and then squeezing and moulding it to make shapes and models.

Staff provide numerous opportunities for children to talk about being healthy, through the use of projects and planned topics, such as food tasting activities. Children demonstrate a very good understanding of a healthy diet, as staff talk to them about healthy eating as part of the daily routine. They have a strong understanding of their likes and dislikes, for example, talking about who likes apple. The children enjoy social snack and meal times where they sit together around small tables and chatter. Children enjoy snack on a rolling programme choosing when to eat within the plan of the session. They help staff set the table although they are not routinely involved in helping to prepare snack or serve their own lunches. Children's individual dietary needs are respected by staff when planning snacks, meals and tasting sessions. Children demonstrate a very good understanding of their personal needs, for example, when they want a drink, competently helping themselves to water.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment, where very good methods ensure they develop a broad understanding of personal hygiene, such as hand washing before baking and after messy activities. Children know they wash their hands to remove germs. Well-organised systems are in place to promote the children's general health, for example, accident and medication recording. All staff hold a current first aid certificate and this is regularly updated as part of the pre-school training plan.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where all potential risks are minimised. Children understand not to run indoors and take care when using scissors, as staff sensitively remind them of good practice. Staff talk to children and effectively demonstrate good practice as they cut up fruit for snack. Fun themes and discussions help children learn to keep themselves

safe and extend their awareness. They negotiate confidently around both indoors and outdoors, extending their independence and learning to keep themselves safe. Children carry large pieces of pipe with increasing skill as they build car runs, which they balance on boxes. Effective systems are in place to ensure that the premises remain safe and secure. Experienced staff complete regular risk assessments and all visitors to the setting are monitored. Accurate records are kept and checks completed on all visitors to the setting.

Children are proactive in making informed choices of activities from an excellent range of easily accessible quality resources, requesting anything they cannot see. Low-level shelving enables them to self-select additional resources to extend their play. Children actively plan their own time with stimulating activities to explore, experiment and progress their ideas. They enjoy a broad range of spontaneous and planned activities as part of daily routines that consolidate and extend their learning. Creative use of space ensures that all play areas are safe, secure and well planned to allow children a place to be quiet, use their creativity, extend their imagination and develop their play. Use of outdoor space continues to be developed to enhance children's experiences. Children have fun undertaking meaningful experiences that challenge and extend them. They demonstrate a very good understanding of their personal needs as they dress accordingly for the changing weather conditions.

Very effective systems are in place to support good practice, as all staff update first aid and child protection training to ensure they are aware of new practices and procedures. The experienced staff team demonstrate a very good understanding of how to keep children safe and promote their well-being. Well organised procedures are regularly reviewed to record concerns and ensure parents continue to be supported.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at pre-school and make good progress in all areas of development. This is due to knowledgeable staff planning interesting activities and fun experiences to motivate and stimulate them. Effective use of the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' ensures they provide good quality care and education. Children are very happy, secure and well settled as they enthusiastically undertake an interesting range of stimulating activities. They make active choices about their play, by selecting resources that build on what they know, extend their experiences and develop their thinking.

Children show good independent skills as they successfully plan their own time by choosing to play indoors or outside. They work together to plan role-plays, planning trips to the seaside and talking about how to get there. Children are curious and interested in all around them, as they confidently move between activities playing with friends. They are extremely confident as they ask visitors what they are doing and engage them in conversations. Children actively seek the support of staff to help find a chosen resource or join in their games, for example, when building car runs from large pieces of pipe. Children establish excellent relationships with staff and children alike, confidently seeking out friends to play with and including adults in their discussions. They recall home events with enthusiasm as they chatter about holidays and baking activities.

Staff consistently respond to children's individual needs and ideas, as they adapt activities to follow their suggestions and join in their games. Children receive high levels of support and encouragement to try out new skills and solve their own problems, for example, working out how high to build the car run. Effective use of observations and staff's knowledge of the children

enables them to build on what the children can do to extend activities to meet their individual needs.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Well-experienced staff demonstrate a very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage to ensure that children progress well in all areas of development. Children are highly motivated and interested to learn through well-planned and spontaneous activities and experiences, which challenge and extend them. They demonstrate good levels of concentration, as they freely access tools and materials to extend their play and learning. Children extend their imagination enthusiastically, making up stories, exploring their creativity in a well-planned area and playing with cars.

Children are very confident as they engage well with each other, welcome visitors and share their achievements. They play well together and alone, as they enthusiastically progress their ideas. Behaviour is very good and reflects the staff's high expectations. Children take turns and share, learning how to manage their own behaviour, respect others and negotiate roles in games. They excitedly chatter together about going on an aeroplane and taking the cats on holiday.

Children are very confident speakers; they listen intently to each other, sharing experiences, as they talk about home, family and events with enthusiasm. Interested staff listen intently to what the children say consistently offering support and suggestions to enhance their experiences. Children demonstrate excellent mark making skills as they explore using a wide range of materials, which they freely access throughout all sessions. They competently use chalks and pencils outside as they make marks and simple lists in role-play games. Some children confidently sound out letters as they spell out their names and recognise the days of the week.

Children consistently learn about number and problem solving through daily activities, counting and sorting as part of daily routines. They help count the number of chairs for the snack table and put the correct numeral on the fruit plates. Children use number and early calculation as part of songs and ring games. They confidently use mathematical language talking about colours and shapes when building. Children carefully spoon icing sugar into bowls, developing good problem solving skills, as they know to add more icing to stop the mixture being too sticky when icing biscuits.

Children enjoy learning about the lives of others through topics, visitors and planned activities. Stories from around the world introduce children to other cultures and festivals, as they enthusiastically recall the story lines. Children learn about growth by planting bulbs and growing seeds. They enthusiastically discuss the weather as they play outdoors. Children excitedly play outdoors in all weathers. They are very competent users of modern technology as they negotiate computer programs to extend their numeracy and literacy skills. They extend their curiosity as they use binoculars to look at small objects and chatter about what they can see.

Children build and design, extending their imagination and their natural creativity using a wide variety of craft materials, as they have free access throughout sessions to make choices. They enjoy mixing paints, talking about colours and make models from play dough. Children have fun making patterns in paint, gloop and sand. They confidently develop role-plays with each other and sing familiar songs with relish. Children recall outings as part of their games, as they act out what happens at the travel agents after a visit. Excellent photographic evidence supports the children's learning and builds on what they know.

Well-organised observation systems effectively monitor the children's progress. Staff complete regular observations based on the stepping-stones to assess where the children are at and plan the next steps. They are in the process of implementing new tracking documents based on the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. However, it is too early to see clearly how this will impact on the process, as assessments do not yet clearly identify the next steps for individual children, or demonstrate how this new process will influence planning to aid progression.

Children successfully undertake a wide range of focused and spontaneous activities, with staff responding and making changes to incorporate the children's ideas and suggestions. Staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the early learning goals, and use this to plan a challenging and interesting curriculum that includes all areas of learning. Effective use of open-ended questions extends children's language and develops their thinking, as staff value what they say. Well-presented displays of the children's work successfully contribute to promoting their self-esteem. Excellent photographic evidence supports staff to demonstrate how children learn and progress.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children build strong and respectful relationships with staff and each other. They show very good self-esteem, to confidently ask questions and actively make choices. This is due to sensitive staff who value their individuality. Children receive consistent praise and encouragement for achievement and for trying out new skills, for example, when helping younger children with tasks and setting the table at snack time.

Well planned, meaningful activities and resources raise the children's awareness of similarities and differences, which in turn increases their understanding of the wider world. They recall home and pre-school events with enthusiasm as they share their experiences with each other. Photographic displays and memory books effectively help recall events and themes. Children excitedly enjoy exploring the outdoors to broaden their knowledge of the community and their environment. They take walks in the school grounds as well as enjoying planned and spontaneous outdoor play times. Staff continue to develop ideas and plans for the outdoor area to provide additional experiences and activities.

Staff and children use numerous opportunities to share experiences as part of planned and spontaneous activities. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcomed into the provision and systems are in place with other agencies to ensure the children are cared for according to their needs. Outside professionals work with the staff to support children's learning and plan programmes to further their development. Staff are starting to use the Rebus symbols with children in pre-school.

Children's behaviour is very good and reflects the staff's high expectations. They understand clear and consistent boundaries, showing care and respect for each other. Children demonstrate excellent negotiating skills as they share equipment and activities, talking together as to whose turn is next when playing number games. They chatter together as they share paint, offering comments and suggestions about what they are doing. Children listen with interest to what each other has to say and are confident to add their opinions. Staff provide excellent role models of behaviour, showing care and consideration for others, which in turn aides the children to learn good practice.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff consistently ensure parents are kept informed about what the children are doing at pre-school. Very good recording and assessment systems chart the children's progress through the pre-school and aids transition into school. Information from parents is added to children's progress records to complete the picture. Activity plans are clearly displayed throughout the setting informing parents of daily events, routines and activities. Parents receive very good quality information about the setting and in turn share their knowledge of their children. Parents confidently approach staff and demonstrate a high-level of satisfaction with the setting, stating that all staff are well informed and professional in their approach. They say they are well informed about their children's development and feel that they make excellent progress in all areas of learning. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the pre-school are good. The effective organisation of the educational provision ensures the successful promotion of children's care and learning. Very knowledgeable staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure that they consistently meet children's individual needs. The experienced staff team work well together following effective procedures that continually monitor and evaluate the provision. Self-evaluation systems are in place based on the Independent Schools guidance.

The senior management team effectively support committed staff to review practice and adopt new procedures. There is a high commitment to personal training and the development of the provision to consolidate practices and further enhance the organisation of the pre-school. Over half the staff hold a recognised early years qualification, with ongoing access in house and external training to continue to develop the service offered. All staff demonstrate a high commitment to personal and professional development. A very comprehensive operational plan, which is outcome based, and extensive policies and procedures are in place to support the setting and offer an effective service. Regular reviews of procedures ensure that they continue to reflect legislation and promote the ongoing development of the setting. Numerous opportunities enable the staff to meet together to share information and consolidate their working practices. Effectively use of observations and assessments monitor children's progress based on the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage'. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## 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 good.

### 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):

- consider offering children additional opportunities to help in the preparation of snacks and serving their own meals
- consider how to further develop the outdoor areas to offer children additional opportunities and experiences.

#### 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):

- continue to monitor tracking documents to ensure they identify the next steps for children.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)