



Howgill Family Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY284918
Inspection date 19 July 2005
Inspector Valerie Block

Setting Address Birks Road, Cleator Moor, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA25 5PT

Telephone number 01946 817900

E-mail bob@howgill-centre.co.uk

Registered person Howgill Family Centre

Type of inspection Childcare

Type of care Full day care, Out of School care, Crèche

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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Howgill Family Centre: Birks Road is one of 5 childcare settings run by Howgill Family Centre. It opened in August 2004 and operates from a building previously used as a primary school in Cleator Moor. The neighbourhood nursery, holiday scheme and crèche operate from parts of the building known as the Ennerdale Unit, Croasdale Room and Kinniside Room. The neighbourhood nursery consists of three rooms: a baby room, a cot room and a playroom for children over the age of eighteen months. The holiday play scheme uses two rooms: a playroom for children under 5 years and a playroom for children aged 5 to 11 years. The crèche uses one of the rooms allotted to holiday care for children under 5 years of age. There are two

outdoor play areas; one at the back of the building and one adjacent to the nursery, at the side of the building. The holiday scheme does not operate when the crèche is in session.

The centre serves the local and surrounding area. There are currently 52 children aged from 6 months to 8 years on roll. No children receive funding for nursery education. A maximum of 66 children may attend the setting at any one time.

Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery opens 5 days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08:30 until 19:30. The separate crèche is not running at present. The holiday scheme operates for all school holidays and is open from 8:30 to 17:00. The holiday scheme is closed for the same weeks as the nursery over the Christmas break.

There are 14 staff working regularly with the children. All the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. Each day there are outdoor activities to help them develop control of their bodies. Children play out in the designated play areas every day, weather permitting. Children enjoy being taken out on regular visits to local parks and places of interest. They become increasingly aware of the way activity affects their bodies and know when they need a drink or a rest. Staff have begun to use the Birth to three matters framework in their work with young children and plan appropriate types of activities and levels of support to give children confidence to try out new skills. Young children begin to try to use ride-on toys and are pleased to find they can push themselves along with their feet. Their self esteem grows when their emergent new skill is recognised and praised by staff who are nearby to assist should the children need them.

Children are cared for in warm, clean premises where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Staff explain the reason why hats and sun cream are important on a hot day. Young children benefit from use of an outdoor area that is covered to give shade to the children. Children are kept healthy as their nappies are changed carefully with close reference to the good, displayed written procedure. This ensures that children are protected from cross infection. Staff ensure that they receive a good amount of information from parents to ensure their children's health needs are met and also give parents information relevant to their child's continuing good health. For example, notices are given to parents when there is an outbreak of an infectious illness giving information about the care of children and the exclusion period.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. They help themselves to drinking water throughout the day. Staff take account of the wishes of parents and

the children's choices to provide nutritious food that appeal to the children and meet their dietary needs. Young children are encouraged to begin to feed themselves and children begin to become confident and independent. Babies are fed on their carer's knee and receive their bottles in a warm, affectionate way. This means that young children's emotional needs for a close bond with their carer are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a spacious, welcoming setting where risks are identified and minimised. Staff supervise the children well and use risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. This means that children are able to move around safely, freely and independently. The setting is made comfortable so helping children to relax and feel at home. For example, there is a cosy settee provided in the baby room where children are nursed. The provider has a very good fire safety procedure and has purchased a cot specifically designed for use in the event of a fire. This means that babies could be moved out of the building very quickly. The staff explain to children the importance of safe practices and help children understand how to keep themselves safe.

Children independently select activities from a wide range of good quality, accessible toys and equipment, which meet safety standards. The staff carefully monitor and supervise children's choice of toys to make sure they are safe and appropriate for their age and stage of development. The provider has all the required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. For example, all of the staff hold a current first aid certificate and have had recent child protection training. Staff have a secure understanding of child protection procedures in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well at the setting. Nursery children receive introductory home visits to help children feel confident about starting nursery. Also staff become aware of individual children's needs and meet their families so helping children to settle well. Children are confident in their setting and appear relaxed and happy with their carers. They relate well to each other and socialise with other children. Children become independent as they choose between a variety of toys, books and activities which appeal to all.

Children of all ages benefit from planned activities which are enjoyable and meet their needs. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework to plan enjoyable activities for young children. Children listen and respond to tapes of music, enjoying choosing instruments from around the world and using them to add their expression to the music. They enjoy making music together as a group of children. All children spend their time purposefully moving about their playroom engaging in different play with the support of their carers. They enjoy exploring a wide range of activities which

contribute to their creativity and their interest in the world, such as foot and hand printing, feeling the texture of soapy water and exploring different textures in treasure baskets. Staff help children to learn the names for different sensations through these activities and encourage children to become competent learners and communicators.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The staff provide a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. For example, they enjoy an interactive frieze on the wall where the children dress paper people from around the world in paper clothes. There are positive images of diversity in the play equipment and in welcome posters around the nursery room. This means that children begin to value diversity. Children learn about their local community as they go on walks around their neighbourhood and to places of interest. Children enjoy the local library staff visiting them to tell stories and share books with them.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. Their needs are met well as they follow their normal daily routine as discussed with their parents. Children show care and concern for each other, and play together harmoniously. They behave very well, responding to the staff's effective use of praise to acknowledge and reinforce good behaviour. Children make themselves at home, confidently deciding what to do, helping themselves to drinks and independently visiting the toilet, where appropriate. They have time to relax as well as be active.

Children benefit from the staff having very positive relationships with parents and a satisfactory level of verbal information exchange. Parents are asked to contribute to the written daily diary so that the staff remain well informed about their views and their children's needs and progress. However, staff do not complete the diary regularly and therefore information to parents about individual children and babies is limited. Interviews with parents show a high level of satisfaction with the children's care and parents are made very welcome at the setting. Parents are pleased to receive a good amount of information about the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The premises are, in the main, used to good advantage. However, babies under the age of 18 months do not have their needs fully met since they have been regularly joining older children in one group. Also, due to storage problems on the site, the baby sleep room has been converted to a nappy change area and pram storage area. The children sleep within the playroom. Children therefore do not have the opportunity to sleep in a quiet area if necessary.

Children benefit from being cared for by a staff group who have all received training in early years work and who also receive regular training to ensure that they are well

informed about relevant good child care practice. The provider has good recruitment and supervisory systems to ensure that staff are suitable. The manager is on the site for part of each day and the supervisors for each group are in charge of their own part of the service when she is not on site. The manager is on call should staff need her, but is also responsible for five other settings within the Howgill childcare service in the town of Whitehaven and the surrounding area so reducing her availability. The deputising system is important to the smooth running of the setting and is currently insufficiently clear. This could adversely affect the quality of childcare at the setting.

Records and procedures are well kept so ensuring that children's needs are met. This means that children are well looked after. Children benefit from a good key worker system and therefore are confident to initiate and extend their own play and learning. This contributes to continuity in the children's care.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

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 there is a separate base room for babies under two and that children are not transferred to an older group until they reach the age of 18 months if that is appropriate for their development
- ensure that quiet areas are provided to enable individual sleep patterns to be facilitated
- ensure that there is a named deputy to take charge of the setting when the manager is absent.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk