



## Newcastle Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	224148
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 July 2006
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<b>Registered person</b>	Newcastle Children's Centre
<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?

Newcastle Children's Centre opened in 1996 as a committee run provision. It operates from two rooms in the Community Centre in Newcastle-on-Clun, South Shropshire. The group serves the local village and surrounding rural area. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. The group is open on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 08:30 until 15:30 each week during school

term times. There are currently 25 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for early education. The group supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. All children currently attending speak English as their first language.

The committee employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is promoted because staff seek information about their medical or special needs, allergies and dietary requirements prior to them first attending the setting. This information is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains accurate. Staff teach the children about good health and hygiene routines from an early age and as a result children are learning to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene. For example, they help themselves to tissues to blow their noses, they place their hands in front of their mouth if they cough or sneeze and they wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating food. Staff further encourage children's self-care skills by praising and congratulating them when they remember hygiene routines without being prompted.

In the event of accidents, children are treated by staff who have first aid qualifications and access to a suitably stocked first aid box. Documentation is maintained regarding the recording of accidents, however an appropriate record is not kept detailing any existing injuries to children and consequently children's welfare is not fully protected. The format of the accident book does not ensure confidentiality and as a result children's personal information is not sufficiently safeguarded. Appropriate procedures are in place regarding the administration of medication and suitable records are kept, which are in line with requirements.

Children's awareness of the benefits of healthy eating is actively promoted at snack and lunch times. Children enjoy a wide variety of healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit and they learn why some foods are better for our bodies than others through themed topic work. They are able to choose a drink of water or milk at snack and lunch times and have independent access to further drinks throughout the day. Children's cultural and dietary requirements are respected through using information provided by their parents.

Children benefit from having plenty of fresh air and exercise each day, weather permitting and they are able to develop a very good range of physical skills using the two separate outdoor play areas, which are enclosed securely. They enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health by developing all their muscles, physical skills, body control and co-ordination. The outdoor area is equipped with age-appropriate play equipment such as a climbing frame, trikes, ride-on toys, balance beams, trampoline, balls and hoops. Children delight in

choosing equipment for themselves which they are able to push, pull or ride. Children are developing their skills of throwing and catching, hopping, skipping and jumping. They play co-operative games, developing their understanding of sharing and turn-taking. Children are developing positive attitudes towards physical exercise and a growing awareness of how it can help them to stay healthy because staff make good references to this fact.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are made very welcome and benefit from having sufficient space and resources to meet their differing needs. Bright, attractive displays of children's work add to the welcoming atmosphere of the setting and children are confident, relaxed and happy in their environment. Children are generally safe and well cared for in premises that are secure and suitably maintained. However, staff do not always make effective use of risk assessments to identify new hazards and thus minimise all risks to children. For example, there are weeds and thorny plants growing through the playground boundary fences and some overgrowth across the entrance path to the premises, so children's safety is potentially compromised.

Staff organise space, furniture and equipment effectively to enable children to move freely and independently between different activities and play areas. Children enjoy using a good variety of high quality toys and play equipment and they are able to reach these resources safely, as they are mainly stored at child height. This encourages them to make their own choices and develops their curiosity and independence. The resources available are appropriate for the ages of the children cared for, are of suitable design and condition, well-maintained and conform to safety standards. Children learn about safety by being encouraged to handle play equipment with care and helping to tidy away toys to prevent accidents from occurring.

Children are well supervised, enabling them to participate in a good range of exciting activities and outings. They are learning to keep themselves safe because the setting encourages the children to begin to understand about safety issues both within the setting and outside, for example children are taught the importance of road safety and regularly practise fire evacuation drills.

Access to the building is carefully monitored and clear procedures are in place for the collection of children by named adults. Consequently, children are well protected. All members of staff have a sound awareness of child protection policies and procedures. Staff are aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and know the relevant agencies to contact if they have concerns. As a result, children's welfare is safeguarded.

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

The provision is good.

All children benefit from a stimulating, colourful and exciting care and learning environment where they make good developmental progress. They clearly enjoy coming to the setting and are very happy, settled and secure. Younger children mix very well with older children, who are confident to work and play independently or in groups. Children are interested and involved in a range of age-appropriate and meaningful play opportunities, which promote their emotional, physical, social and intellectual development. They are forming positive relationships with other children and staff, who help them to develop their independence and self-esteem through sensitive interactions and regular encouragement. Younger children's care is well promoted and is being further enhanced through the gradual introduction of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This ensures that the activities offered are adapted to meet their individual ages and stages of development.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning for nursery education is good. Staff place a strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and this approach underpins children's ability to fully participate in all other areas of learning. Children are warmly greeted by friendly staff and arrive at the setting keen to participate in the wide range of exciting activities on offer to them. They are confident, separate happily from their parents and carers and enjoy warm, caring relationships with the staff and other children. They are happy, well-motivated and settled. Children access a good range of well-chosen resources which support their development across all areas of learning. Children are able to freely choose from these resources and confidently make decisions about their play, so encouraging their independence and self-confidence. They behave very well, with staff continually praising and encouraging them, so enhancing their self-esteem and re-enforcing their positive attitudes to learning. Children are supported in their play by staff who engage appropriately with them, are good role models and who work hard to help children develop their play opportunities to extend their learning.

Children know and understand their own needs and with adult support, become aware of the needs of others. Their independence and self-care skills are developed through day-to-day routines, for example, they use the toilet independently and they get ready for outdoor playtimes with minimal adult help. They learn to help each other, to share toys and equipment and to understand how to take turns, for example, in using the computer or ride-on toys in the outdoor play area. Children are praised for their achievements, so they become proud of their successes and feel valued.

Good progress is being made by the children in communication and language development. They are able to hold meaningful discussions with each other, often using descriptive language to express their feelings and opinions. Staff make time for children to ask them questions and they respond by giving good answers and explanations to sustain children's interest. Good use is made of circle time to allow children to share familiar experiences and ideas and talk about home and family. They are starting to understand the concept of listening to each other and taking turns to talk when they join in at this special time. Children enjoy having stories read to them and listen intently, showing excitement and pleasure by joining in with familiar parts of their favourite stories. They spontaneously access books for independent enjoyment, as the book area is well-resourced and inviting. Children

have opportunities to see and recognise written words, including nursery equipment labels and their own names. They also have many opportunities for writing and are able to link letters to their sounds. Activities such as role play are used to introduce children to writing, for example, the post office has envelopes and writing pads for messages. Children also enjoyed writing out wedding invitations when they staged a wedding celebration. Focused activities are used to help children practise their letter formation before they start writing for a purpose.

Children are gaining ability with numbers. Many count up to ten and above and they benefit from seeing numbers displayed in their learning environment. Through their participation in number rhymes and songs, children are starting to learn about simple addition and subtraction. The children use mathematical language and have knowledge of space, shapes and measurement. They describe different shapes and are starting to link this knowledge to every day situations, for example, they use shapes in their craft activities and talk about circles, squares and triangles. Mathematical language is threaded through routine daily activities and is actively planned for in the curriculum.

Children develop knowledge and understanding of the world when they participate in activities relating to their local environment, such as in visiting a nearby farm and taking walks across the field to the riverside, where they are able to discuss the habitats of creatures living in the river. Children benefit from having access to their own garden, where they have constructed a willow tunnel and can enjoy walking through it. They use child-sized gardening tools to plant seeds and then watch them grow. Adults and children both enjoy the aromatic smells of plants in the sensory garden area. Children learn about different cultures from their own through well-planned and well-resourced activities. Good resources are used by the children to extend their skills in information and communication, such as in using play telephones, push-button toys and the computer.

There are many opportunities for children to use music and movement as physical activities to develop their co-ordination and control by moving in different ways, clapping, dancing, marching or crawling. Children are enthusiastic when singing rhymes and action songs and show delight when they hear both familiar and new musical pieces, such as 'Peter and the wolf'. Children can access various tools to use for different purposes to help develop their fine motor control skills, for example, scissors for cutting, threading beads and construction sets.

Children are encouraged to make very good progress in their creative development through producing paintings, drawings and models which are valued and displayed within the setting. Opportunities to participate in interactive workshops, such as puppet making and live theatre presentation, fire their imaginations and they talk excitedly about what they are making and doing. They take great pride as they present their own productions, especially as their parents and carers are able to watch in an audience at the end of a session. Children play imaginatively, using a well-resourced role play area, where they can independently select resources and use fact or fiction to act out their experiences from home and the wider community, thus developing their imagination and creativity. Music is effectively used and children appreciate the opportunities they have to listen and dance to various pieces and they enjoy singing popular tunes and rhymes.

Children are covering all areas of learning and they are making good progress towards the early learning goals as the person-in-charge has a very secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. She is assisted by a team of staff who have also accessed appropriate training. A variety of exciting and varied teaching methods helps to ensure children remain motivated and keen to learn. Children are well supported and grouped appropriately, enabling older children to work in small groups on focused activities. There are effective systems in place for finding out about children's developmental starting points and individual interests on entering the setting. Mechanisms are also in place for using ongoing information provided by parents. Children's continual progress is observed by all staff and recordings made of their achievements. However, it is only the person-in-charge who tracks children through the 'stepping stones' and completes overall assessments. As a result, assessment information is not consistently being used by all staff to assist in the planning of activities to meet children's individual learning needs. This can very occasionally mean that older or more able children are not sufficiently challenged.

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

The provision is good.

Children develop a sense of belonging within the setting as they form excellent relationships with their peers and the staff. Parents are encouraged to share their knowledge and views of their children's development and this ensures that staff can provide the most appropriate care for the child, based on their individual needs. Children are secure and settle quickly as staff know them very well and take account of their different personalities and needs when welcoming them into the setting.

All children are able to develop an awareness of the wider world around them as they access resources and activities that encourage a positive attitude towards diversity and a non-stereotypical view of society. They frequently participate in themed topics where they can learn about different cultures and festivals through a range of practical activities and experiences. Colourful displays create an enriched environment where children can see an extensive range of images that promote positive views of diversity. Children are actively involved in their local community and often receive visits from people living and working in the community who enable them to learn about the world they live in.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are very well behaved and respond to the good role models being offered by the staff. Furthermore, they are encouraged to share resources and take turns and are learning to take responsibility for their own actions. Children benefit from having consistent boundaries and their self-esteem is well promoted through praise and encouragement. Their understanding of right and wrong is increased through gentle reminders to care for their environment, the resources and each other. Effective systems are in place to ensure children with learning difficulties and disabilities are identified, well supported and have their individual needs met.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are respected and made to feel very welcome in the setting. They are provided with comprehensive information

about the provision, which includes details about nursery education and how children work through the Foundation Stage of their education. The person-in-charge ensures that information from parents concerning their child's development and particular interests is used as a starting point for planning and assessment. The provision for children identified with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Staff work in partnership with parents and external agencies to ensure children benefit from high levels of appropriate support, thus enabling their full participation in the life of the setting. All parents are consulted and kept well informed about what their children do and their achievements through regular discussions and access to their child's own development folder. Further information about the provision and any changes relating to the care provided for their child is available through newsletters and information on the notice board. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the setting. Details about the range of activities their children are involved in are displayed, which outline the topics they will cover. Children and parents are then encouraged to bring appropriate items into the setting from home, therefore supporting these learning experiences and opportunities. Children benefit from these close partnership links as their needs and interests are acknowledged and acted upon.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The management team has a clear overview of the setting and strengths and weaknesses have been highlighted, with an action plan in place to improve the existing good care practice. This helps to ensure that the care provided for the children is regularly under review, with a commitment to continuous improvement. There are effective procedures for recruiting, inducting and supporting staff and they are all familiar with the organisation of the setting, which ensures it runs smoothly at all times. Staff are able to access appropriate training opportunities and are committed to improving their knowledge and understanding, as their self-development is supported and valued by the management. This in turn helps to maintain a fairly steady staff group, thus helping to ensure consistent care for the children.

The premises are well-organised and good use is made of the space available. High staffing ratios and the grouping of children means that they are extremely well cared for. All children are well-known to the staff and management, which ensures they are able to meet all their individual care needs. This is further developed through regular discussions with parents and carers. Staff work very well together as a team and demonstrate great enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that stimulates, excites and motivates children of all ages.

Policies and procedures are clear and comprehensive. Staff's knowledge and understanding of these contributes to their successful implementation, thus ensuring that children are safe and appropriately cared for. Documentation is in good order and kept in line with requirements. Children's records and parental consent forms are kept in lockable storage facilities.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure that children's dignity and privacy is always respected. The management committee have provided discrete nappy changing facilities and repaired a toilet door. As a result, children's privacy is now ensured and their dignity is respected.

There were no key issues identified at the last nursery education inspection.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **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):

- review and improve accident recording procedures to ensure confidentiality and also ensure that any existing injuries to children are formally recorded, with entries countersigned by parents
- improve children's safety by making effective use of risk assessments.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop the existing assessment procedures to ensure that all staff are able to track children's individual progress through the 'stepping stones' and

consistently link the information to the planning of activities that meet children's individual needs.

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