



Ashington Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY314465
Inspection date	04 August 2006
Inspector	Marie Mcconville
Setting Address	Ashington Children's Centre, Second Avenue, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9HB
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Registered person	RASCALS Ltd
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ashington Children's Centre nursery, out of school club and creche is situated in a newly refurbished school building that is within walking distance of the town of Ashington in Northumberland. Transport systems are regular making the setting easily accessible. The nursery is open 52 weeks of the year from 07.30 until 18.30, Monday to Friday. The out of school club is open 07.30 until 09.00 and 15.30 until 18.30 during school term times and 07.30 until 18.30 during school holidays. The creche is open during school term times in accordance with demand. There are currently 188 children from birth to under eight years who attend the provisions. Children attending the nursery have access to their core rooms and associated areas

that are all situated on the ground floor of the building. Children attending out of school clubs and creche have access to their core room and other associated areas through negotiation with the nursery. There are outdoor play areas that children may access. There are 23 members of staff including managers who work with the children who attend the nursery, out of school club and creche. Each member of staff holds an appropriate childcare qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good personal hygiene through planned daily routines and the positive role models staff provide. For example, they wash their hands after visiting the bathroom, before meals and snacks. Staff give good explanations as they prepare tables for snack, talking to the children about what they are doing and why. Older children attending holiday club have developed a good understanding of personal hygiene and remind each other to wash their hands before sitting down together for lunch. A good range of policies and procedures regarding health issues, such as accident recording, and information about infectious diseases are well known by staff and shared with parents. This minimises the risk of cross infection and preserves the well-being of all children.

Children enjoy a balanced diet that takes into account the wishes of parents regarding dietary requirements. However, menus are not displayed in advance so that parents are not well informed about the range and balance of food their children access. The setting have recently taken part in 'Stop the rot' campaign to raise children's understanding of good dental hygiene. As a result, children have access to fresh drinking water and may access drinks as they wish. For example, younger children have access to feeding bottles while the eldest children access chilled drinks from the refrigerator as they wish. Staff provide snacks of fresh fruit at regular intervals during the day. Children are making choices about the fruit they choose, helping them develop an understanding about being healthy through diet. Older children have access to a fruit basket and select fruit during the session as they please. Children learn about being healthy through topics and themes, while the eldest children take part in incidental discussions about healthy eating as they sit and eat their lunch with staff. Parents of babies are well informed about their children's food and fluid intake through well maintained records that they access on a daily basis contributing to their health and well-being.

Children take part in outdoor play on a daily basis, weather permitting, to promote their health through physical exercise. They take part in vigorous activity during adult led games and access to a range of equipment to develop physical skills, such as balls, hoops, trampets and a range of wheeled toys. Babies access a range of equipment and toys to promote their physical development on a daily basis to practise sitting, standing and walking.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well maintained, secure and welcoming environment. They are safe indoors, outdoors and during outings because staff are vigilant and put into practice a range of procedures to maximise the safety of children at all times. For example, detailed written risk assessment carried out weekly by a member of staff responsible for health and safety issues, sleeping children regularly checked and regular fire drills that children take part in. However, while staff are vigilant when children are playing outdoors, arrangements to make drains safe have been noted by staff, but not yet addressed, compromising the all round safety of children using the outdoor play area.

Children access a range of toys, activities and games that are well maintained because good routines are in place to ensure that they are safe and hygienic. For example, babies' toys and activities are cleaned on a daily basis while resources accessed by older children are assessed regularly to ensure they are safe and complete. Daily visual risk assessment means that children make choices about what they want to do and play with in an environment that promotes their safety and well-being.

Knowledgeable staff fully understand and follow the nursery's comprehensive policies and procedures to protect and preserve children's well-being. Children are beginning to show an awareness of personal safety during every day activities. For example, as they remind each other not to push as they make a line prior to going to the dining room for lunch and take care as they move around in the Wet Room. The manager has a good understanding of issues relating to child protection, while the staff team are aware of their own roles and responsibilities regarding the protection of children so that overall, children's welfare is promoted and safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, children attending all provisions within the setting are happy, confident and have made good relationships with staff and their peers. Children under three years take part in a range of activities that help them make progress in their development and early learning because staff, particularly those working with babies, have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They use it well to assess children's progress to underpin the planning of the programme of activities. Babies confidently explore their environment. They have many opportunities to practise sitting, crawling, rolling, standing and walking because activities are interesting and promote babies exploration. Staff interact very well giving babies lots of praise and gentle encouragement. Older children are developing their communication skills through emerging speech. They are making choices as they decide which fruit they want at snack time. They take part in sensory experiences, such as the Wet Room, when they splash in the water sprays and enjoy the feeling of the water spraying in their faces. Staff know the children well so that the experience is enjoyed by all including children who have additional needs. Children over three years enjoy adult

led activities and take part with great enthusiasm in circle time when they take part in singing with gusto. They practise counting and enthusiastically count beyond ten and communicate their ideas well through speech. However, at times children lose interest in planned and incidental activities because staff do not have a secure understanding of the methods used to assess children's learning and development and the correlation between assessment and planning of the programme of activities. Therefore, challenges set for children are not always set at the correct level. At times, children's abilities to make choices about what they want to do is hampered because activities and toys are poorly labelled and stored in wicker baskets that do not allow children to see what is inside. This impacts upon the best balance of adult led and child driven activities. Staff interact well with the children, they give praise, lots of encouragement and share jokes with the children so that children are valued and are developing good self-esteem. Children over five years attending the holiday play scheme are secure in their relationships with staff. Senior staff know the children very well, treat them with respect and have high, realistic expectations of the children. Children take part in an interesting range of activities that are planned in advance, so that they continue to make progress in their learning through fun, recreational activities. Older children take part in staff meetings when they help decide on the topics that are followed and help plan the programme of activities. Children play together well, they talk together about what they are doing and clearly enjoy their time spent in the setting. Children say 'I like coming to see my friends and doing the activities', 'I'm the oldest resident, I've been coming for years and still like it here, we have fun and go on lots of outings.'

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are eager to attend and enjoy the time spent in a welcoming environment that values and acknowledges each child as an individual. For example, older children take part in planning their programme of activities, younger children are congratulated for efforts made and staff respond to the non verbal communications of babies. A good range of information regarding the individual needs of children is recorded so that staff are knowledgeable about the children in their care and meet their needs well. Children learn about the wider world as they take part in activities to celebrate Chinese New Year and Mardi Gras. They make paper lanterns, create colourful face masks and taste food. However, there are insufficient positive images of diversity within the setting to help all children to understand and value differences. Children learn about their own community through walks in the local area and visits further afield to Whitehouse Farm. The staff work well with other agencies, parents and carers of children who have additional needs. The good exchange of information and knowledgeable key workers mean that all children are fully integrated into nursery life and access the full range of activities provided within the setting.

Children behave well because staff use a range of strategies that help children learn right from wrong and provide positive role models for the children. Children are able to share, take turns and are beginning to think about the needs of others. Younger children show care for one another as they ensure that they each have a doll to look after during role play, while older children wait for each other to finish their meal

before taking part in activities they have chosen to do together. Children are developing good manners, younger children are gently reminded to say please and thank you, while older children are courteous to each other and the staff.

Staff have developed good relationships with parents, many of whom have used the service for a number of years. Parents are made welcome in the setting to exchange daily information about what their child has done. The parents notice board informs parents about special events and white boards in each of the rooms informs parents about the daily menu and the activities their children have taken part in. Each child has a record of achievement that parents may access and share with their child as they wish. Parents of babies have daily access to good, meaningful information about their baby, that includes what they have done, what they have eaten, when they have slept. Parents are informed about the policies and procedures of the setting on their child's admission. They may have access to the full policies on request. A complaints procedure is in place, however, it does not include contact details of Ofsted.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting is well organised. A broad and varied selection of resources and activities are provided so that children are making steady progress in their development and learning. The required policies, procedures and record keeping systems are in place, well organised and readily accessible to the staff team. Good recruitment and selection procedures mean that staff are well qualified and suitably experienced to work with the children. The induction process for new staff, the appraisal systems and regular staff meetings result in a team who are motivated and feel valued as individuals so that children benefit from the support and interactions of practitioners who clearly enjoy working with children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted. 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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. 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):

- continue to develop the outdoor play area to maximise its use, ensure all areas accessed by the children are safe
- continue to develop the knowledge of staff working with children aged three to five years, the methods used to assess what children know and can do to plan the next steps in their play, learning and development
- further develop positive images of diversity within the setting
- ensure the complaints procedure contains contact information of Ofsted
- ensure that toys and activities are appropriately labelled promoting freedom of choice so that children take part in a well balanced range of adult led and child driven activities.

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