

Emerald Nursery and Children's Centre - Crook

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY240209
Inspection date	13 March 2007
Inspector	Julie Morrison
Setting Address	11 North Terrace, Crook, County Durham, DL15 9AZ
Telephone number	01388 767300
E-mail	
Registered person	Emerald Childcare
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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.

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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Emerald Nursery and Children's Centre-Crook, is one of four day care facilities run by a husband and wife partnership. It was registered in January 2003 and operates from one large building, with accommodation on three floors, in the centre of Crook.

A maximum of fifty three children attend the nursery at any one time with twenty one under two years. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently seventy four children aged from birth to eight years on roll. Of these thirteen receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area.

The nursery employs thirteen staff, ten of which, including the co-ordinator, hold appropriate qualifications with two working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Good standards of hygiene and cleanliness are maintained throughout the nursery which promotes children's good health. Tables are cleaned before food, table cloths or placemats are used in most rooms and staff wash hands before putting food out. Staff adhere to suitable nappy changing procedures, they wear gloves, use changing mats, wash hands and dispose of nappies appropriately, to reduce the risk of cross-infection. Consistent adult support and guidance helps children to become increasingly independent in their personal care, for example, washing hands before snack, after messy play and after the toilet. Older children confidently use the toilet themselves, pictures are displayed above the toilets to help children to learn how to use the toilet correctly and staff discuss with children why they wash their hands, so they "do not get a poorly tummy". A clear written policy regarding sick children and the effective recording of emergency consents, medication permission and accident records, promotes children's health and well-being.

All children have regular opportunities for physical exercise which contributes to their good health. Babies are able to move around, roll, crawl and explore their environment, as well as getting regular fresh air by accompanying staff on walks to the shops or to collect children from school or nursery. Older children have regular access to a secure outside area, where they enjoy a range of physical activities. For example, running, climbing, ride on toys and bike riding, as well as role play in the play house and drawing chalk pictures. Children benefit from visits to another local Emerald Nursery, where they take part in a sports and fun day, with race, games and water slides. Such opportunities support the children in developing gross motor skills and aid ongoing physical development.

Children have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating through planned activities and a healthy diet. They explore and taste different foods and discuss which ones are healthy, staff encourage them to try new fruits for example, dried bananas and cranberries. All children benefit from nutritious snacks, including fresh fruit, dried fruit and breadsticks with cheese. Within the out of school club children have a choice of breakfast which includes, cereal, toast, porridge and fresh juice, milk or water. Well balanced and nutritious lunches and dinners are provided as part of a rolling menu, and include, sweet and sour chicken, shepherd's pie and chicken with noodles. The cook tries to ensure that the children get to try new flavours and includes dishes such as curry and caribbean chicken. Some of the children have constant access to water, however, this is not consistent across the rooms. In one room, children have their names on water bottles, however as some of the children are not yet able to recognise their name there is a risk of cross infection if they drink from the wrong bottle. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children's individual dietary needs are met. For example, children who are dairy free.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment where most of the risks have been identified and minimised. For example, the outside area is checked every morning before children go out to play, maintenance jobs and repairs are recorded in a book and ticked as soon as they have been completed and the coordinator regularly audits the accident book to ensure that there are no reoccurring accidents. The premises are secure, doors and gates

are locked and the setting benefits from CCTV cameras, however, at present there is no signing in book for visitors to the centre. The rooms are all laid out to enable children to move around independently and freely to explore their environment. Child sized storage, shelves, boxes and trays mean that most of the resources are accessible and children are able to make independent choices from a wide range of good quality and developmentally appropriate resources.

Children are well protected because the setting has a good range of written policies and procedures, covering safety issues, which are understood and implemented by staff. For example, lost and uncollected children, sleeping babies are regularly checked and fire procedures are in place, including regular fire drills. Children are kept safe on outings as staff ensure that all appropriate consents are in place, they have a high staff to child ratio, carry first aid kits, spare clothing and mobile phones with emergency contact details in them. Babies are securely strapped into pushchairs, and older children wear wrist straps and are beginning to learn to keep themselves safe as they discuss road safety and hold hands.

Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to children protection, which effectively safeguards children. They have a clear written child protection policy in place and a secure understanding of the signs and symptoms to be aware of, including if an allegation was made against themselves.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are developing warm relationships with each other and the staff, who are welcoming and give the children lots of attention. As a result most children are happy and settled at the nursery. Staff photographs are displayed at the entrance hall and individual rooms have children's and pet's photographs displayed. This contributes to a sense of belonging for the children and is welcoming for parents. The stimulating environment provided by the nursery allows children and babies to develop a breadth of skills and experiences. For example, babies thoroughly enjoy exploring the smell and texture of custard and jelly and practice spooning it into plastic cups, children join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes and enjoy dressing up and role play.

Staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are implementing this well with the older children within this age range. They have effective measures in place for planning, monitoring and assessing children's learning. A wealth of photographic evidence in the rooms clearly links to the birth to three framework and children are making good progress across all areas of development. The younger children and babies have recently been split and changed rooms, to provide more age appropriate activities, however, this means that birth to three is not as well established in these rooms.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Staff use long and short term plans to provide a broad range of activities across all areas of learning, which are clearly linked to the stepping stones and identify differentiation for children's abilities. Some staff make good use of questioning to extend children's learning, for example, they ask the children what does it feel like? How many have you got? However, opportunities to extend children's learning outside of focused activities are sometimes missed and some children spend time undirected and not involved in any activities.

Children benefit from a key worker system and progress is effectively monitored and recorded in children's individual files. Written observations link to the stepping stones and photographic evidence shows involvement of the children in all areas of the curriculum. Most of the children clearly enjoy coming to the nursery and staff ask the children their name and how they are feeling at circle time. They happily engage in solitary play cutting paper to make belts or joining in with activities. However, some of the children are quite unsettled at the nursery which has an impact on the children as a group, and also on staff who spend a lot of time trying to reassure such children.

Children show care and concern for one another, they practice taking on and off their shoes and socks and offer to help each other. Some children know the routines well and remind each other of rules, such as wearing an apron when playing in the water. However, some children do not interact with the group fully, for example, at tidy up time they do not join in and they lose interest at circle time. The children are beginning to show an understanding of the world and are developing good communication skills as they discuss the weather and decide what it is like outside. They engage in songs and familiar nursery rhymes, for example, twinkle twinkle, all enjoy reading books both as a group and individually. Some of the children are able to find their name to put on a gingerbread man display at the beginning of the session and staff discuss what letters their name begins with. However, generally opportunities for linking sounds to letters are limited. Children have some opportunities for mark making as they use pencils and chalk but none attempt to write their name.

Some good use of questioning by staff encourages the children to become interested in counting and numbers, for example, when they remove their socks and shoes staff ask how many toes they have and familiar nursery rhymes reinforce counting to five. However, some everyday opportunities to develop learning in this area and simple calculations are missed, for example, at snack time. Children show some interest in shape, as staff discuss what shapes they have made with the soft dough.

Children are able to develop a good range of investigation skills as they explore water and pasta, and use a 'feely bag' to describe what the items inside feel like, for example, rough, smooth and soft. They listen to a CD of different noises and try to match these to the sounds. They are developing good skills in using one handed tools, such as scissors and cutting knives for the soft dough and most can use the mouse and the computer for simple programmes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children at the setting are treated individually and valued, the setting displays a wealth of work done by the children and the staff have a written inclusion policy and try to ensure that they respond to the individual needs of the children. Children learn about the world around them as they celebrate Easter and Mothers Day and go for walks around their community. For example, to the shops, park and library. They have some opportunities to learn about different cultures and diversity through planned activities looking at different beliefs, playing music from other cultures and using small world figures to discuss illness and disability. However, activities and resources to promote diversity are limited. The setting benefits from a special educational needs coordinator who is committed to ongoing training to develop her skills and knowledge in this area. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of children with learning disabilities or difficulties and are committed to working with parents and other organisations to ensure that individual needs are met.

Children's behaviour in the setting is generally good, they benefit from positive relationships with staff who know them well. They recognise when children are upset or tired and children confidently go to them for support, cuddles and reassurance. Children begin to understand right and wrong through consistent boundaries, praise and age appropriate techniques, such as distraction and explanation. For example, staff gently remind children to share and explain not to climb on chairs as they may get hurt. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from very good relationships between staff and parents who are positive about the care and education that their children receive. Parents receive an informative booklet prior to joining the nursery and then an information pack which includes further details about the setting, policies and procedures and the complaints procedure, although this has the old Ofsted address on it. Information about the children, such as likes, dislikes, allergies and health needs ensures that children's individual needs can be met. Extensive information is available to parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the 'Birth to three matters' framework, including videos for parents to borrow. Effective communication through monthly newsletters, notice boards, verbal feedback and daily information sheets ensures that parents are kept informed about their child's day. Information sheets about the current nursery education topic, what they will be doing and what parents can do at home to develop learning are also given to parents, which allows parents to further develop children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Secure recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that children are protected and cared for by staff with relevant experience, knowledge and skills. Good induction programmes, staff appraisals and regular staff meetings ensure that staff are valued in their work and work together well. Staff are committed to attending relevant training to enhance their personal development and the care of the children. Most of the staff have received training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and hold current first aid certificates.

The setting has a comprehensive collection of policies and procedures which are implemented and understood by staff. All required documentation is in place, securely stored for easy access and to ensure confidentiality. Children are well cared for in an organised environment which promotes their welfare. Space is used to its maximum potential, enabling children to move around freely and independently to access toys and resources. Quiet areas ensure that children and babies are able to rest if needed, whilst physical development is promoted through outdoor play and local walks.

Leadership and Management is satisfactory. The coordinator is aware of her roles and responsibilities, which results in the smooth running of the setting. She values and is supportive of staff which creates a happy and friendly environment in which to care for children. The coordinator has a very good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, however, she is not as clear about the Foundation Stage which means that she is not able to effectively set clear directions for the nursery education and outcomes for children. However, the manager is committed to the setting, its development and the care and education of the children who attend.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure that hygiene practices prevented cross infection and that records were stored confidentially. The setting continues to use hand towels but these are now regularly changed to reduce the risk of cross infection and all records are stored and recorded with regard to confidentiality.

They were also asked to organise grouping of children, the setting now splits the nursery education group when there are a large number of children present. The book corner has been moved and reorganised to ensure that children can access books unhampered by equipment and the curriculum includes all areas for development. The setting was also asked to extend opportunities for children to develop mathematical and large physical skills. The children now benefit from a wide range of outdoor equipment as well as trips to the park to play with balls and fun days at another nursery. Some opportunities for mathematical development have been developed, however, there are still missed opportunities for counting and calculation in everyday play.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 satisfactory.

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 children have constant access to fresh drinking water, which is free from the risk of cross infection
- ensure that there is a clear record of visitors to the setting
- develop opportunities for all children to learn about diversity and different cultures through planned activities and the appropriate use of resources
- ensure that information on the complaints procedure is up to date.

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):

- ensure that all children are appropriately engaged in meaningful play, where learning is supported by staff
- increase opportunities for children in the development of their counting and calculations, writing and linking sounds to letters
- ensure that all staff and the coordinator have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage

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