

Riverside Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	310201
Inspection date	13 February 2007
Inspector	Jasmin Myles-Wilson / Kathleen Snowdon
Setting Address	Riverside Centre, Minton Lane, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE29 6DQ
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Registered person	North Tyneside Council Community Services
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 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?

Riverside Children's Centre was first established in 1995 in North Tyneside. The centre provides a range of childcare services which include a nursery, out of school care and crèche on behalf of the local authority.

The nursery is open from 07.30 until 18.00 Monday to Friday all year round. A maximum of 100 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 118 children from birth to under five years on roll. Of these 28 children receive funding for nursery education. There are seven members of staff work with the funded children, all hold appropriate qualifications, including a qualified teacher. The nursery subscribes to The North Tyneside Approach, which is a holistic approach to the health, care and education of young children. There is a crèche facility available, for parents wishing to access training, within the Sure Start Strategic Partnership. It is available five days a week, Monday to Friday, at various times between hours 09.00 to 17.00. The nursery provides placements for training students.

The Out of School Club is open five days a week, Monday to Friday, and sessions run from 08.00 to 09.00 and 15.15 to 18.00 during school term time and 08.00 to 18.00 during school

holidays. A maximum of 24 children may attend the club at any one time. Children over the age of eight may also attend. There are currently 20 children on roll. There are three members of staff work with the children. The manager and one staff member has a level three qualification, the other member of staff is currently being accessed for a level three qualification. The provision also runs a Saturday club and sessions run from 10.00 to 14.00 all year round, and caters for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The children are cared for by a manager and four supply workers, who have level three qualification. All children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting supports several children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is protected because staff have good and consistent hygiene practices and procedures in place. For example, the equipment and premises are kept clean and staff encourage children, who are able, to take care of their own personal care. Children develop good personal hygiene habits because they are given support to be independent when dealing with their own personal needs. Highly appropriate arrangements are in place for the exclusion of sick children and for reducing the spread of common illness and infections. Children increase their understanding of a healthy lifestyle through various topics and discussions, such as the need for sleep. Older children understand the importance of carrying out simple and well established routines such as washing their hands before eating food, and need little prompting to do so.

Children are well nourished and have appetising food which they enjoy and which sufficiently meet their individual dietary requirements. Young children have weekly worthwhile sessions such as fruit tasting which introduces them to new tastes while the older children have opportunities to experiment with healthy foods such as making fruit smoothies. Children are sufficiently hydrated because they have good access to water throughout their day and those who are able independently help themselves to drinks from water machine.

Staff recognise the need for children to exercise, therefore, very good opportunities are given to children, which they enjoy. For example, children exercise their whole bodies by jumping off low walls and running around outside, while young babies can practise new skills such as crawling, due to space provided. Older children show good awareness of space as they safely manoeuvre around objects and people. They also confidently use and handle tools correctly, using fine motor skills and hand and eye co-ordination. Children's need for rest is also considered and they are given opportunities to rest according their needs. Young children's individual routines are respected and followed to give continuity of care and follow parents wishes. This information is recorded and shared with parents

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment that is purposely built and designed to meet their needs. Staff have a very good understanding of how to achieve a balance for children to move freely yet having safe limits. Therefore, children are comfortable and can move around safely in the well maintained rooms, which have well-defined areas for the varying ages. Children

have a great sense of belonging to the group as the artwork is displayed such as painted self-portrait.

Children have easy access to a very good range of interesting and developmentally appropriate toys and resources. They can independently select toys of their choice from low level shelving and drawers. Staff ensure that they are thoroughly suitable through the ongoing cleaning and checking routines.

Staff pay close attention to children's safety and are vigilant about their supervision at all times, therefore, children are kept safe and secure and risk of harm is minimised. Children learn about the importance of keeping themselves safe through discussions such as road safety. Older children have clear knowledge that they can go to the police, should they get lost when on an outing. Children are safeguarded and their welfare is protected because staff are well trained and have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the protection of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children enjoy and engage in activities that are of interest to them, which are developmentally appropriate. For example, they clap and try to sing songs such as "Twinkle, twinkle, little star" and begin to associate words with action that correspond with songs such as " Roly Poly." They show natural curiosity and are stimulated by resources provided, for example, children's stare is riveted to a bottle of glittered water which is being tipped up and down or they explored treasure baskets that are filled with various textured objects. Staff use 'Every Child Matter' framework and 'Birth to three matters' framework very well to plan stimulating and purposeful activities. They observe what children can do which informs them of how to move children on to the next step. Young children are encouraged to use their senses to find out about things, for example, they bite, smell and handle real fruit such as mango and pineapple. The very informal planning gives older children the opportunity to 'chill out' after school. Children benefit from a home from home and environment and young children's routines are respected and gives them continuity of care, which helps them to settle easier and engage quicker. Staff and children form warm connections through play, small chatter and using facial expressions, therefore this enables children to settle well.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They receive very good support from a resident early years teacher and together they plan and bring the six areas of learning alive for children. Staff work well together in providing an environment that is well organised, which helps children to take initiative and develop increasing independence. They know the children well and centre activities around children's abilities. Planning covers most areas of learning well but staff miss opportunities to ask children to use their knowledge of numbers to do simple calculations such as add one or take one away. Assessments and observations of children's capabilities is efficient and children's progress is clearly seen and their next step is mapped out. Children with English as an additional language or learning difficulties and disabilities are fully integrated in the group and staff support them well. Staff listen to children and are patient in their approach, valuing children's choice, therefore, children's self-esteem is increased and good connections are formed and established. The outdoor area is being developed to give children more opportunities to investigate their surroundings. Children enjoy outdoor play and have good opportunities to exercise their physical bodies.

Children are competent communicators, they talk with each other, and with staff and visitors with clarity and confidence. For example, children approach and ask inspector for help in zipping their coats up. They initiate conversation and talk about what they are doing, for example, as they make happy and sad face shadows with material fruit, they talk about the look of the face such as 'that's a sad face.' Children listen intently to stories and join in with favourite ones such as " We're going on a Lion Hunt" and they say with glee "again, again." They do extremely well in linking sounds to objects and things they are aware of. However, staff give limited opportunities for children to make marks to communicate meanings as part of their daily activities, such as making shopping lists when the green grocer shop is set out.

Children are confident in forming good relationships with others and are courteous such as approaching staff for support to do things such as putting an apron on and being polite to others. They happily play alongside/with each other and are learning to share and negotiate using equipment such as the computer. Children have very good awareness of the boundaries within the group, for example, wherever they see a picture of sad face they know this area is out of use until the face is changed to a smiling face. They show good levels of independence as they confidently make decisions about their personal needs, such as putting on their coat to go outside to play.

Children are committed to learning and confidently operate and use tools, such as moving the arm of the overhead projector up and down and tilting the mirror until the shapes they are looking at are focused. Children develop a sense of time as they differentiate between the past and present, for example, they recall 'yesterday we made fruit smoothies but we haven't made any today.' Children use their imagination excellently and are consumed with what they are doing. For example, a group of girls concentrate on dressing up in sparkly dresses and all that goes with it, and chatter excitedly about going to a party.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met well as staff utilise detailed information they receive from the parents which they use as a launch pad to develop children's learning. Their awareness of their community and the wider world increases as they have firsthand experiences of other cultures through mixing with their peers, having visitors and take great pleasure in visiting places. For example, they enjoy visitors such as African dancers or visiting the discovery museum. They learn to respect differences and have full access to resources that depict positive images and promote diversity.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered as they are valued as individuals and staff boost their self-esteem by encouraging them to focus on what is positive. For example, children's recognised acts of kindness towards others is noted in the 'Golden Book.' Staff are skilled at intervening if children do not behave well, therefore, children learn what behaviour is acceptable. There is a very calm atmosphere and staff demonstrate positive role models.

Partnerships with parents and carers is good. Trusting and warm relationships are developed through staff being approachable and available to discuss information regarding children with their parents. Parents are given good information and kept fully informed of events within the setting such as regular newsletters. They are kept informed, in various ways, about their child's progress, achievements and experiences. Parents enjoy having opportunities to be a part of nursery life by helping out with outings or fund raising.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are kept safe from unsuitable people by the rigorous recruitment and selection procedure that is in place. Staff have excellent knowledge of child development but commit themselves to further training which enhances their practice and skills. They work well together and liaise very efficiently with other agencies so that together they meet children's needs effectively. The high staff ratio enables staff to support and give plenty of attention to children, therefore, children are kept safe, settled and participate by being given choices. The very good organisation of the nursery enables children to be grouped according to age and has specific areas which promote children all-round development. Documentation is very well organised and all essential records are kept and easily accessible, which contributes to the safety of children and the efficient service provided. However, information for parents regarding contacting Ofsted is not easily accessible for parent's reference.

The leadership and management is good. The manager leads by example and motivates staff by her hands on and professional approach. Staff are valued and are supported to provide good quality care and education for children. Together with the expertise of an early years teacher they develop plans to help children develop in the six areas of learning. On a regular basis the manager meets with staff to map out training to further develop their skills. The manager is exceptionally organised and is committed to improving the service provided for children. Areas of strengths and weaknesses are identified by the manager and are discussed with staff. Together they take steps to improve learning opportunities for children. For example, plans are in place to develop the outdoor play area to give children the scope to explore and be more inquisitive. Staff have sound knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. The manager and early years teacher review the quality of teaching through regular evaluation. Part of the future plans are to equip staff with the knowledge and understanding of the new early years Foundation Stage covering children from birth to five years.

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 recommendations were made for the nursery to develop the use of information technology and the outdoor area so it supports children's learning further. It was also a recommendation to improve the procedure for countersigning medication forms.

The nursery has now purchased a computer and children competently use it and are increasing their knowledge of how to operate it more effectively. The outdoor area has been and is continually being developed so children now have opportunities to investigate and explore growing things such as vegetables. Parents now countersign medication forms which show they have been informed of medication administered to their children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 1st April 2004 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

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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):

- improve the information given to parents about how to contact Ofsted, for example how to make a complaint, and ensure it is available at all times

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):

- increase children's opportunities to use simple addition and subtraction during planned and spontaneous activities and to practise writing in similar ways.

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