

# Early Learners

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY332809
<b>Inspection date</b>	03 August 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Judith Ann Hodgson

<b>Setting Address</b>	Thornley Primary School, Coopers Terrace, Thornley, DURHAM, DH6 3DZ
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<b>Registered person</b>	Early Learners
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Early Learners (formerly Thornley Children's Centre) is a day care facility located within Thornley Primary School. The registered provider is a company limited by guarantee. The setting provides full day care, wrap around care and out of school care for up to 26 children under 8 years old. It operates in the school's foundation stage unit, an adjoining area for children aged two to three and a separate baby room. Children attend from the village and the local surrounding area. There are currently six children on roll who attend for varying sessions. The setting is open from 08.00 to 18.00, Monday to Friday, all year round except between Christmas and New Year. There are four members of staff working with the children, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications. Three of these staff are working towards further qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

#### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn good hygiene practices as staff remind them to wash their hands at appropriate times. Children also learn through the staff being good role models. Staff spray and wipe the

tables before snack time, talking to children about why they are doing this. The risk of cross infection to children is minimised by the use of paper towels for hand drying and the setting's effective sick child policy. Staff members safeguard children's welfare in the event of an accident as they all have current first aid qualifications, have access to a first aid box and permission has been sought to obtain emergency medical care.

Staff seek details of the children's dietary requirements before the onset of care which enables them to meet children's individual needs. The setting is keen to promote healthy eating, encourages children to make healthy choices and gives support to families to provide healthy packed meals. Children are learning the importance of healthy eating as staff join them to eat fresh and dried fruit, wholemeal toast and sandwiches.

Children develop their physical skills very well as they have daily access to a very well resourced outdoor play space. They go for walks, use the school yard and have good opportunities to climb on an indoor climbing frame. Younger children are closely supported to explore their skills. Some areas of the outdoor provision have been identified for further development and are currently undergoing improvements. These include the provision of a grassed area and a small garden.

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

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a well organised, spacious and child friendly environment. Friendly staff, children's work and photographs on the walls and a range of inviting activities provide a stimulating atmosphere. The layout of the rooms enables the children to access different areas for play. For example, children make independent play choices as the wide range of good quality toys and activities are attractively stored within easy reach. They choose from the role play area, construction and indoor climbing equipment or play outside in the sand or water. Children enjoy shared experiences as there is sufficient child-height furniture to enable them to sit together comfortably. For example, at snack times, children enjoy chatting with each other and staff as they share their food.

Children are cared for in a very safe, secure and well maintained environment. For example, visitors are greeted and required to sign in at reception, the setting doors are locked and staff greet children and visitors. Children are not able to leave unsupervised as the doors are locked when children are in the nursery and the outdoor area is securely fenced. These robust steps, along with close staff supervision, maintain children's security. Staff carry out thorough risk assessments regularly on all areas of the provision to identify and minimise any risks to the children's safety. Safety measures, such as a soft surface outside, fire drill practices and fire control equipment, reduce potential hazards and keeps children safe.

Children are safeguarded with regard to child protection issues as staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. They are confident in implementing the procedure and know who to contact should they have any concerns.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at this setting, they concentrate well and are fully occupied. They have access to a very good, wide range of resources and equipment which is suitable for their developmental needs. They develop their imagination very well as they play with dolls and

pushchairs outside. They use the indoor climbing equipment with delight as they act out scenes. Children access this area freely and are well supported in their play. They learn about materials as they have access to natural objects. For example, they explore logs with magnifiers. Staff are sensitive to support the children's play through asking open questions and make suggestions to enhance their games. Children have fun as they play in the well resourced outdoor area. This provides them with opportunities to explore sand and water, use large ride on toys and enjoy the fresh air.

Table top activities enable children to play quietly should they choose. For example, a table with glitter, dough and cutters is well used by younger children. Staff know the children well and take steps to plan and provide them with activities that promote their individual interests. Children are relaxed with the staff and understand the routine of the setting which enables them to feel confident.

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

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed here. Staff value and respect the children and are aware of their individual needs. This helps children to feel secure and have a sense of belonging. The children have good opportunities to learn about each other and the wider world. They have access to a wide range of playthings, such as books and role play equipment, which reflect differences and increase their awareness of a wider world. Children are well behaved. The staff support them to take turns and encourage them to share the resources and activities. The range of activities and the high level of staff involvement in play mean that inappropriate behaviour is kept to a minimum. However, the manager has identified behaviour management as an area for development. Recent training undertaken includes positive behaviour management and the manager is keen to implement this approach.

The setting promotes a good relationship with parents through efficient exchange of information and family support. A parents pack, notice boards, daily diaries and discussion at each end of the care session means that parents have all the information they need to be involved in their children's care and development. Children benefit as this effective relationship provides continuity of care.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a very well organised environment. The skilled staff work well together and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and are committed to developing their knowledge and improving their practice. This ensures that children have a good level of care. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place, which support the safe and efficient management of the setting. All of the required documentation is in place, is well organised and stored securely to maintain confidentiality.

The indoor and outdoor play spaces and resources are well organised making them stimulating and exciting play and learning environments. Children are able to move freely around the setting, choosing their activities. Staff spend time with the children to provide a safe and secure place for them to play where they are happy, relaxed and confident.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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 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 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):

- continue to improve the physical play opportunities outdoors
- continue to implement improved strategies to further promote good behaviour.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)