

# Emerald Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | EY288945         |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 16 July 2007     |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Kathleen Snowdon |

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| <b>Setting Address</b> | Sure Start Centre, Clifford Road, Stanley, County Durham, DH9 0AB |
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| <b>Registered person</b> | Emerald Childcare |
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| <b>Type of inspection</b> | Integrated |
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| <b>Type of care</b> | Full day care |
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## 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 satisfactory. 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, Stanley is one of four day care facilities run by a husband and wife partnership. It was registered in June 2004 and operates from two main areas which are further sub divided. Children are placed in groups according to their age and developmental stage. There is a fully enclosed area for outdoor play. The nursery operates Monday to Friday, from 07.45 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year.

The nursery is close to local amenities, including schools and leisure facilities. A maximum of 36 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 70 children on roll, of whom 20 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding communities. There are 12 staff who work directly with the children; all hold appropriate qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Effective visual reminders prompt the children to carry out self-help tasks. For example, in the bathroom they look at photographs of themselves and their peers engaged in activities, such as hand washing. This promotes the development of good personal hygiene habits. Meaningful discussions with staff help older children to make the connection between cleanliness and being healthy. They talk about how germs affect health, for example and in doing so the children gain a deeper understanding of the human body. As well as this, there is a sensible policy that deals with sick children. This minimises the spread of infections and common illnesses.

The children have opportunities to be active. The youngest children practise and perfect new skills, like walking and crawling, with careful support and encouragement from staff. All the children handle items, such as mobiles, writing tools, scissors and action toys that encourage the development of fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Older children take part in lively activities during which they run, jump, stretch and sway. This teaches the children that exercise is fun and boosts their fitness levels overall. Soothing music helps the children to relax and unwind.

Varied and appetising meals offer children the nourishment that they need to grow and develop as they should. The menu includes casseroles, for example, with ample portions of vegetables. The children sit together as they eat to encourage the development of essential social skills, such as holding a conversation. Nutritious snacks are served between meals to keep the children comfortable and satisfied. These include cheese and a range of fruit, to encourage the development of healthy tastes and preferences. Lunches are fairly well presented, which enhances the children's experience of eating. Snacks, however, are presented in a very basic way.

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

The provision is good.

Secure external doors prevent unauthorised access to the nursery. This, alongside the staff's strong awareness of child protection issues, protects the children from unsuitable people and potentially dangerous situations. Sensible rules create a culture that raises children's awareness of every day hazards. For example, children are asked to walk, rather than run, indoors and are reminded that this minimises the risk of accidents occurring. This enables them to negotiate space safely and teaches them that they have a part to play in staying safe.

Staff make the most of the well lit and well ventilated nursery environment. They ensure that play areas are well resourced and organise storage to give children easy access. This encourages the children to make decisions and choices. The wide range of good quality and developmentally appropriate toys and equipment is clean and well maintained through thorough, ongoing checks from conscientious staff, who give priority to children's safety and well-being. Weekly fire drills equip children with the knowledge that they need to cope with emergencies.

Very good measures keep the children safe during outings in and around the local community. Before they go out, they talk about possible dangers, stranger danger for example, and traffic. Skilled staff encourage the children to think of ways to overcome these hazards. As a result, the children work out for themselves that simple strategies, such as holding an adult's hand

before crossing the road and talking to known people only, keep them safe. The children wear high visibility jackets when they are out, which allows staff to identify them with ease.

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

The provision is good.

Excellent relationships exist between children and adults. Children benefit from staff's full attention so consequently, children are happy, secure and well settled. Positive early experiences like these help the children to feel valued and enable them to form strong, subsequent relationships with others.

An interesting range of activities, based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework, keeps the youngest children engaged and motivated. For example, they experiment with painting techniques, using potatoes, mushrooms and onions to make prints. Their sensory development is boosted when they handle sand, compost, bark and sawdust and take part in fun activities that require them to identify things like garlic, curry and vanilla by their smell.

Children use easily accessible and interesting resources in different ways; conventionally and to represent other items, such as when they put a colander on their head and pretend it is a hat. This encourages the children to use their imagination and gives them plenty of scope in which to enjoy themselves. The range of equipment in general is good and supports children's progress in all areas of their development.

#### **Nursery Education.**

Children enter the nursery happily. They have opportunities throughout their time there to talk about themselves and aspects of their life, such as their favourite song or their family. By doing so, the children develop a sense of themselves as members of different communities. The children show curiosity and interest, which encourages them to find out about things, for example, when they ask visitors to identify themselves and ask them to explain what they are doing.

All the children speak clearly and confidently. They are competent listeners, especially at story time when they become engrossed in favourites like 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Children look through a range of books and have access to pens, pencils and other markers. This enables the children to practise pre-reading and writing skills and supports their communication, language and literacy development.

Although children do not have access to computers at present, they use a range of programmable items, such as remote-controlled cars and compact disc players. These help the children to develop technological skills. Frequent outings in the local community increase the children's sense of belonging while occasional visitors, the road safety officer for example, teach them about the roles of people who help us.

The children express their creativity in role play and at song time. They join in with gusto and enthusiasm and have access to a wide range of musical instruments to encourage their obvious appreciation of music. Songs, such as 'One, two, three, four, five', teach the children about number sequence, while moulds and cutters help children to identify shapes. The children learn about weight and measurement as they use scales, rulers and similar items in planned activities. However, there are too few opportunities for children to experiment with these in spontaneous activities, such as role play.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The bond between children and staff gives children the confidence to ask for support and guidance as they play. This develops trust and encourages the formation of attitudes and dispositions that make the children receptive to new learning experiences.

Children make sound progress towards the early learning goals through staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage. This, as well as the frequent observations that staff make of the children as they play, enables staff to make plans that are based on the children's individual starting points. Plans cover all six areas of learning and are clearly linked to the stepping stones. They include learning intentions and the resources required. Although they do not include activity evaluation, staff assess how effective activities are through observation and discussion with colleagues. The children's progress is tracked using early learning profile charts that are used throughout the local authority. A key worker system allows staff to get to know the children well and enables them to use teaching methods that best suit individual children.

There are specific play areas, although the constraints of the open-plan nursery environment means that these are not that well defined. However, staff work hard to compensate for this, by constantly re-arranging furniture and resources to provide appropriate space that gives children some scope to initiate their own play. The stimulating outdoor environment in particular provides the children with many opportunities to explore and experiment at their own pace.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are treated with equal concern and regard. They are included in the full range of activities and have access to the available resources. Children learn about culture and ethnicity through celebrating festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Christmas. Jigsaws and books depict images of people with disabilities and people engaged in roles that are usually associated with the opposite sex. This raises the children's awareness of important issues like disability and gender. However, the range of activities and resources that promote positive images of diversity is limited.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff use appropriate strategies to help children to understand boundaries and acceptable behaviour. Older children receive a sticker for being helpful or kind for example, which encourages the development of positive personal qualities. Clear explanations from staff help children to understand that their actions have consequences. This enables children to distinguish right from wrong.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents of babies and younger children receive day sheets that contain important information, such as nappy changes and the activities that children have been engaged in. Daily discussions keep the parents of older children informed about their child's progress at nursery, while regular newsletters and a dedicated notice board circulate news of current events in the nursery. Parents have positive views of the nursery and the service that it provides. They describe staff as 'patient, welcoming and friendly' and describe the setting as 'excellent'.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

All staff hold appropriate qualifications. As well as this, they take part in further training to improve their practice and keep abreast of trends in child care. Recent courses include child

protection, behaviour management and first aid. Recruitment procedures are sufficiently rigorous to ensure that only suitable people are employed, which contributes to the ongoing safety of the children.

Documentation is well organised, readily available and stored securely on site to protect confidentiality. All essential written policies and parental consents are in place. Staff ensure that the registration and public liability certificates are displayed prominently, which allows parents to scrutinise them should they wish to.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Senior staff understand the importance of being effective role models. An open door policy operates, enabling staff to consult and confer with senior staff throughout the day. Staff work well as a team and all have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, which means that the nursery runs smoothly on a day to day basis.

Regular staff meetings enable staff to discuss issues relevant to their work and matters that relate to the children. Staff monitor and evaluate the care and education they provide through use of parental questionnaires and liaison with early years teachers. Staff are resourceful, enthusiastic and keep the welfare and happiness of the children that they care for and teach at the heart of what they do.

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 nursery was asked to ensure the confidentiality of records. Documentation is stored securely and reviewed regularly, which keeps information accurate and up to date.

#### **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 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 satisfactory. 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):

- review the way that snacks are presented to the children and extend the range of activities and resources that promote diversity (also applies to nursery education)

### **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 opportunities for children to weigh and measure in spontaneous activities, such as role play.

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)