

The Croft Nursery (Newcastle)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218503
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Inspector	Lynne Milligan
Setting Address	The Croft, 102 Lancaster Road, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 1DS
Telephone number	01782 614247
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Registered person	Mary Ryan & Mr Christopher Ryan
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Croft Day Nursery opened in 1990. It operates from a detached house within its own grounds on the outskirts of Newcastle town centre. The nursery has access to four playrooms, kitchen, toilets and an enclosed outdoor area. It serves the local and surrounding community.

There are currently 52 children under five years on roll. This includes 11 funded three-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a number of children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The setting opens five days a week all year round except bank holidays and a week at Christmas. Sessions are from 07:30 until 17:45. Full and part time places are available.

All staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. One member of staff has qualified teacher status. The setting receives support from teachers and staff from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy and are protected from infection because they are cared for by staff who carefully follow the good, clear procedures in place. Children are encouraged to learn about personal hygiene and older children will confidently explain that you need to wash your hands before you have dinner and brush your teeth when you have finished. Children's personal independence is encouraged. Routines for the care of babies are generally good and clear procedures are in place for sterilising bottles and nappy changes. Staff wear protective aprons and gloves, however, babies are not given the opportunity to have their hands washed after they have had their nappies changed. Consequently some children are at risk from cross-infection. All the staff are first aid trained and there are good procedures in place to record any accidents or medication administered; parents always sign these records to ensure they are kept well informed of these aspects of their child's care.

Children are well nourished by the home cooked meals provided by the nursery. Children thoroughly enjoy their meals, showing staff how full their tummies are. They talk to staff about what they are going to have for lunch, eagerly helping to give out the plates and cutlery and pouring their own drinks. The menu includes plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables in the meals and snacks provided throughout the day. Any special dietary needs that children may have are carefully recorded before care begins and then transferred to lists in the kitchen and their individual care rooms to ensure those needs are met. Drinking water is available freely for children to access and staff also encourage children to have additional drinks after physical play to ensure they are well hydrated.

Children very much enjoy the outdoor play area. They have time each day to develop their physical skills, both indoors and out. They practise balancing on the beam and develop coordination and skill with the wheeled toys, hoops and balls. Children make regular visits to the local park to enable them to challenge and further develop their skills and on visits to the local town centre where they explore their environment. Physical play is planned every day for all age groups to ensure their development in this area is fostered appropriately and they can benefit from being outdoors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in premises which are clean, warm and well maintained. The nursery is a welcoming setting for both parents and children. There are bright displays of the children's own work at child height and numerous photographs on walls and in folders which they can look through to nurture a feeling of belonging. Throughout the nursery there are notices for parents to ensure they are well informed of all aspects of their child's care, for example, daily menus, activities and upcoming events in the nursery.

The nursery is well equipped with a wide range of inviting, good quality resources. There is comfortable seating throughout to ensure babies are comfortable whilst they are fed and cuddled, and young children will eagerly gather around a member of staff, sitting on laps and snuggling up as they chat about home life. All resources meet the appropriate safety standard and are checked regularly for safety and hygiene.

Very clear and updated risk assessments, together with vigilant staff, help children to generally stay safe within the setting and on outings. However, not all areas are checked thoroughly before children go outside. Therefore children's safety could be compromised. All the appropriate policies and procedures are in place and these are followed carefully. All children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe through the discussions they have about road safety. When they go out within the local area they are developing an understanding of how to cross roads safely, including stranger danger. In addition, they practise the fire evacuation procedure regularly. Children are further protected by the safeguarding children policy which is in place. All staff have undertaken external or in-house training in child protection procedures and have a good knowledge and understanding in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The children relish their time in the setting. They have an excellent attitude to learning and are happy, settled and purposefully engaged throughout the sessions. The children are enabled to become familiar with their surroundings, to explore and develop solid relationships with staff and peers. Time is used well to enable the children to make choices and to develop their chosen task, to lead their own learning and experiences. Children's ability to do this has been extended by the excellent implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the absolute belief in its ethos of child-centred learning adapted by staff. Routines are specific to individual children's needs. Children are extremely confident in their interaction and relationships with staff and peers. The excellent range of activities and resources enable them to explore and create using all of their senses. In this way the children gain knowledge of the world around them and start to build their own identities within it.

New experiences introduced to the children include exploring textures such as jelly, paint, water and glitter. They go out into the local environment to see the farm animals, visit the market and play in the well equipped, soft surface outdoor area. In the toddler room the children delight in a variety of activities that include watch making and t-shirt design. They are beginning to develop mathematical skills through practical activities such as counting how many bowls they need for lunch or deciding whether they have too much or too little as they pour drinks into the cups. Spatial awareness is developed as children draw around their hands and manoeuvre round obstacles as they crawl in and out of tunnels. Exciting and stimulating plans help children discover their creative ability as they make binoculars and splat paint on the paper folding it to make a blob. Staff fully appreciate that providing excellent learning opportunities and resources facilitates true independent learning.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff are animated and inspirational, and use their excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, stepping stones and early learning goals to help children progress in all areas.

Planning, observation and assessment is extensive and is colour coded and numbered to which specific stepping stone it relates to. Staff's wealth of knowledge and expertise is used to ensure positive outcomes for children. Children consolidate and extend their learning as staff frequently ask questions and use every opportunity in the setting as an extension to learning. For example, when children are making their way outside they stop to look at the 'magic beans' they are growing. Staff ask which one is the tallest and children quickly identify the tallest bean. Children

then point to another bean, explaining why it hasn't grown as much as the other one 'because its not been rained on'.

Children have a positive attitude to learning. A varied and exciting curriculum ensures that children are fully challenged at all times. They are confident to try new activities and become totally engrossed in their play, for example, baking cakes. They are interested, and motivated to learn and try activities, often jumping up and down with excitement as they watch the letters on the laptop change colour. The children have excellent personal independence skills, for example, personal care needs. They choose activities and access the toilets independently. They have a very good understanding of why they need to wash their hands and the reasons for keeping themselves clean and tidy.

The children use speech to organise and explore real and imagined experiences, ideas and feelings. For example, they talk about their pet dog who is poorly and what they can do to help him. They give him some water and apply a bandage for his sore leg. Children enjoy listening to stories and join in their favourite ones with excitement and vigour. Children read stories to each other; one child in the book corner told his friend the story of the big bear, holding the book so that he could see the pictures and then changing the end of the story, laughing as they explore their imaginations. They link sounds and letters and are able to recognise the sound their name begins with. One child told the inspector how he spelt his name and what every letter stood for, then confidently showing her on the laptop the letters that are in his name. Children are beginning to form recognisable letters and most can write their name on their pictures of spiders adding the number of legs they have. Children are developing number and problem solving skills through a variety of activities which enables them to use numbers spontaneously in their play and everyday routines. They recognise numerals, and use developing mathematical ideas to solve problems. All children can count to 10 and most during circle time, up to 20. They can answer questions such as what numbers come before and after 20 as they practise the date and month. They can name all basic shapes such as circle and triangle. They can position and count from left to right, name bigger and smaller than, full and empty and find the odd one out.

Children thoroughly enjoy exploring and investigating new and familiar objects such as looking at newly hatched chicks and how flour changes to cake mix as they add the ingredients. The children know about the uses of everyday technology and use Information Communication Technology and programmable toys such as tills in the shop, calculators, phones, talking books, to support their learning. They expertly use the computer and a keyboard without adult help as they skilfully use the mouse to print off their work. The children find out about past and present events in their own lives. They confidently talk about family at home, can say if their sibling's are younger or older than they are, and have enjoyed topics looking at past and present items such as Christmas, comparing the changes through the ages. They understand about nature and eagerly take pictures of the leaves and bugs that interest them. They can eloquently name all the days in the week and know what day it was yesterday and what day it will be tomorrow. Children begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people. They regularly practise French as their visiting teacher sings nursery rhymes and practises key words including their names. Children sit attentively and mouth the sounds of the words she is making, watching her mouth and copying what she says with intense concentration.

Children move confidently with control and co-ordination in a variety of ways including jumping and crawling. They move imaginatively and safely, with control and co-ordination under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment and assault courses. The children show an awareness of space both for themselves and others, for example, they are able to run confidently

around each other using control and co-ordination, and steer their bikes as they pretend to be on a race track outside.

They recognise the importance of staying healthy, and the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. Children sit quietly after their lunch waiting for their food to go down before they go outside to play with staff reminding them that 'exercise keeps them healthy and you cant run about with a full tummy'. They use their imagination in a variety of ways, including dance, aerobics and activities such as 'stretch and grow' where children learn about what their little bodies can do.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and free from discrimination. Staff listen to what they say and ask questions about their experiences and interests. All have access to the full range of activities provided and staff ensure these are adapted where necessary so promote inclusion. There are many resources readily available which reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability. Children learn to respect and enjoy cultures and beliefs through celebrating festivals such as Eid, Hanukkah, Christmas and Easter. This positive approach ensures that children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Effective procedures are in place for the care of children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Systems are in place, including working fully with parents and outside agencies to ensure children reach their full potential whilst in the nursery.

Children are very considerate and thoughtful with each other. For example, they consistently say 'please' and 'thank you' as they sit together at mealtimes and play outside, sharing the bikes making sure they each have one. Staff are calm and consistent in the way they manage behaviour and use effective yet sensitive strategies. Whether children are part-time or full-time staff encourage them to be the 'star helper'. They wear a badge that says 'I am the star helper' and carry out such roles as giving out cutlery at mealtimes, helping with activities and assisting their peers throughout the day. Children's self esteem is further promoted as staff share these experiences with their parents and carers. Consequently positive relationships are continuously promoted throughout the setting.

Good relationships have been built with parents. Information is shared verbally as well as through written daily records, regular newsletters and notices. Good quality information is provided about the setting's policies and procedures. Verbal and written feedback in the form of questionnaires and cards from parents is extremely positive and they speak highly of the staff and the care and education their children receive. Partnership with parents with regard to nursery education is also good. Parents receive good, well-presented information about the Foundation Stage through the notice boards, newsletters and the nursery prospectus. They are well informed about their child's progress by means of an open door policy and more formal arrangements, such as a written report and open evenings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the commitment of staff to meeting their individual needs. Staff are qualified and most are very experienced; all staff work very well together as a team. They show great sensitivity to the children and make their care and education their first priority. The key worker system, which is in place throughout the nursery works very well. As children progress

through the various rooms, staff are very careful to pass on all relevant information which helps to make the transition as smooth as possible. In addition, if children are new to the nursery, the key workers gather as much information as possible in order to provide good quality care, helping the child to become settled and happy. This ensures children's individual needs are met very well.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are good. Staff are positively encouraged to undertake regular training and see this as beneficial. They receive very good support from the management team and standards throughout the nursery are monitored closely. Staff are encouraged to take responsibility for the planning and assessment systems within their room and to assess their own practice. This is monitored by the manager and then further discussed at regular cluster groups.

Staff are well organised to ensure the recommended ratios of children and adults are maintained and there are clear procedures in place to accurately record attendance of children and staff. Recruitment and vetting procedures for new staff are robust and ensure all adults are suitable. All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is extremely well maintained, is kept up to date and is accessible to parents and staff.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the setting was required to improve in three areas. The first was to ensure the daily record of staff attendance and the arrangements for obtaining written parental acknowledgement of medication given to children are accurate. Registers now precisely show times of arrival and departure for all staff. Written consent for the administration of medication is in place including concise details of any medication given, signed by parents and staff. This ensures that the welfare and care of all children are fully supported. The setting was also required to request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice. Consent from parents is now in place on all children's registration details. Consequently children are well protected should the setting need to seek emergency medical treatment or advice. Finally the setting was asked to ensure the written statement on behaviour management includes bullying. Through extremely effective monitoring of its provision, the management have updated their policy to include guidance on how it will manage any incidents of bullying. This ensures that children's self esteem and confidence is positively promoted through well organised procedures.

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

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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 nappy changing procedures to ensure that all children have the opportunity to have their hands washed
- improve safety procedures to ensure that the outside area is kept secure.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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