

# The Croft at Total Fitness

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	260348
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 February 2008
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<b>Registered person</b>	Croft Nursery School Limited
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. 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 at Total Fitness Nursery and Crèche opened in 2001. It operates from a self-contained unit with four children's group rooms and own facilities, at Total Fitness Health Club's premises at the Parklands in Newcastle. The Nursery and Crèche serve the local area.

There are currently 70 children from birth to five years on roll. This includes 12 funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week all year round, except bank holidays and one week at Christmas. Sessions are from 07:30 until 18:00.

There are 15 staff working with the children and a supernumerary person in charge. All of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's understanding and awareness of good health and hygiene is exceptionally well promoted through well planned daily routines. Children are learning about their personal hygiene and how to keep healthy, by washing hands at appropriate times during the day. Children know to wash their own hands after messy play, using the toilet and before eating. They automatically go to the sink in the pre-school room to wash their hands during the day at appropriate times. They are aware of the reasons why they wash their hands, for example all children could explain that they wash their hands so that they get rid of the germs. They follow stringent routines for washing their hands from posters displayed in the toilet area, with further support from staff as they consistently reinforce their learning. Children also ask to wash their hands if they feel the need for example, one child who had just finished kneading her salt dough mixture asked to wash the dough off her hands before she rolled it out as it would stick to the rolling pin. Older children are able to explain the reasons for drying their hands correctly, for example they say "you have to dry your hands or they'll get sore". Procedures are further promoted through excellent nappy changing routines. Babies wearing nappies and toddlers using potties have their hands wiped, followed by clear, simple, appropriate for their age explanations, as to why it is important to do this. Staff are exemplary role models to the point where it is second nature for them to follow such rigorous routines.

Children are comforted if they become unwell and are extremely well protected from infection through clear procedures. Children's welfare is promoted as all staff hold a valid first aid certificate, and accident and medication records are superb.

Regular opportunities are provided for all children to enjoy physical play both inside and in the fresh air. They have the use of a wonderful soft surface play area which backs onto a large park and nature walks that the setting makes optimum use of. The area is well equipped which enables children to fully develop their physical skills. Resources include bikes, balls, slides and climbing and balancing beams for the children to climb on and as they enjoy moving with control using their bodies in various ways. The children also take part in regular dancing and music activities. Opportunities are further promoted as babies laugh with excitement as they explore the big bubbles in the paddling pool and in the warmer weather it is taken outside where older children play and relax in the refreshing, cool water.

The children are very well nourished. They have very good opportunities to learn about healthy eating because the setting provides children with regular drinks, and extremely healthy snacks such as wholemeal toast, a variety of fruit, oatcakes and cheese. Shopping trips to the local supermarket enable children to touch and smell various fresh fruit and vegetables with further opportunities to taste them when they return to the nursery. Children understand the importance of eating healthy food and are able to say what foods are healthy. For example, when eating fruit, one child said "We have these 'cus they're healthy and water helps you think." Children are able to help themselves to a drink at any time during the day, with younger children being regularly offered theirs to ensure they do not become dehydrated. Children with allergies have their needs met because staff liaise with parents before children start and also throughout their time at the group.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are safe as a result of the staff's excellent awareness of health and safety and the wide range of supporting policies and procedures. High priority is given to reducing the risk of accident or injury, and risk assessments cover different levels of risk, such as likelihood, risk-factor and hazard categories. Checks are carried out at different times of the day such as before children arrive, during sessions, and at the end of the day to ensure children's safety at all times. Robust attention is given to all aspects of safety inside and outside the setting such as protective inserts in the gaps of doors and sharp edges outside covered with padding. Furthermore, children learn the importance of keeping themselves safe through planned and unplanned learning activities as they carefully follow instructions, ensuring they each have wrist band before they go out on their visit to the pet store. There is an outdoor play procedure which is strictly adhered to and children understand simple rules to keep themselves safe such as staying on the soft area, no running till they get outside, no pushing and taking it in turns to go down the slide. They are well protected through in-depth evacuation and fire safety procedures which are regularly practised and recorded. Excellent organisation of space ensures that children can choose independently from activities, and move around freely and safely.

Children are cared for in premises that are welcoming and child centred. Staff give top priority to ensure that all children, whether they are attending the crèche for an hour or spending all day the nursery, are welcomed individually as they arrive. They spend plenty of time talking to them, making sure they are comfortable and settled. Displays are striking, bright and at child height and children's work and photographs are beautifully displayed. All areas are brightly decorated and clean which creates a warm, welcoming environment for the children. Children are kept safe as the premises are extremely secure and the safe procedure for the collection of children is thorough. Parents of children in the crèche follow an additional, rigorous procedure whereby they wear a coded wristband that matches the child's entry details. Staff ensure parents are well informed about the rules of the crèche, further maintaining children's safety at all times.

The children are exceptionally well protected from harm because all staff have an in-depth understanding of their role in child protection. There are clear and thorough child protection policies and procedures in place. All staff understand known indicators of abuse and are aware of the procedures they should follow in the event of a concern about a child in their care. Therefore, children's welfare is fully promoted and safeguarded.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children and babies are extremely happy and settled. They benefit from sensitive interactions from staff to promote their care and development. Very warm, caring relationships enable children to feel safe and secure. Their care is significantly enhanced by very effective organisation. Knowledgeable staff successfully provide innovative experiences to ensure children enjoy what is on offer at the nursery. They work diligently to ensure children and babies reach their full potential through very enjoyable play opportunities. Space and resources are organised successfully and spontaneous and inspired activities provide young children with interesting and exciting experiences to broaden their overall development. Children are stimulated and play effectively, both independently and with others.

Young children enjoy their time in the vibrant environment where they make active choices about their play to enhance their own progress and personal development. Children are highly motivated and show age-appropriate levels of interest in an exceptional range of indoor and outdoor activities. Excellent play opportunities are utilised by staff to provoke children's thoughts as they begin to steer their own play. They play sensitively with dolls and show developing care and concern as they hold and feed them, linking familiar caring routines. Young children actively engage in interesting tactile play as they experience different textures. They explore the leaves on the primroses in preparation for mothers day. Their understanding is extended as they investigate the roots, feeling the soil they are growing in. This learning is further reinforced as they choose a paint colour which is then transferred through their image onto paper. Children use the paintbrushes to dip and spread the paint, gaining skills in dexterity and coordination. They demonstrate age-appropriate understanding of the different textures using clearly defined language to describe bumpy and crinkled. They develop a wide, ongoing vocabulary because staff talk to them all the time, introducing new words as they experience interesting and appealing activities and talk about what they are doing.

Every opportunity is given to encourage children's emotional and personal development. 'Patch', the teddy bear, is used to help children talk about their experiences as they discuss the places he has visited, reading his diary about his adventures. They chat about his holiday to Australia or about the day he went to Granddads for tea. This helps children to make connections between their own feelings and those of others as well as making connections between their home and the nursery.

Babies make significant progress as they develop skills in hand-eye coordination with an excellent range of hand-held toys. They are visually stimulated with bright wall displays and ceiling mobiles and are highly motivated in their early physical development as they progress through sitting, crawling and walking. Toys and resources are attractively set out to encourage children to experiment and explore. They listen to music including soft music and recognise familiar voices as staff return from lunch breaks. A very young child eagerly gets to his feet to welcome a returning staff member and giggles delightfully as she scoops him in her arms and cuddles him. Babies play with soft cubes, bottles filled with interesting and stimulating materials and silk scarves. One baby expressed awe and wonder as the staff member gently pulled the scarf across her face, giggling with delight as she played 'peek-a-boo'.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to successfully plan activities for babies and young children. They are very knowledgeable about the objectives and record them clearly in a weekly planning sheet, covering all components. Accurate records are maintained through excellent and varied observations which show children's progress and effectively plan for their next steps to impact positively on their growth and development.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The planned curriculum is comprehensive and all staff demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and the Foundation Stage. A simple, but highly effective planning system covers all six areas of learning and includes intended learning outcomes, support and extension activities and evaluations of work that has been completed. They are able to build a good picture of children's rates of development and progress across the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Continual, rigorous monitoring of their curriculum maintains their high standards. Records are highly useful and show how children settle in. They detail children's preferences and behaviour and are used to identify any learning difficulties or delays. Staff observe and assess during

sessions and record these to inform future planning of activities and grouping of children. Staff demonstrate that during free play they know when to join in, intervene or ask questions to help learning and when to stand back and to let the children do the finding out for themselves. The range of adult led and child initiated play is very well balanced. Staff deployment is very good and effective team working is clearly evident. The excellent use of time, resources and space creates days which flow well and children are seen to be occupied happily. The exciting range of activities, which interest and excite the children, are resourced very well. Staff demonstrate how resources feed into each area of learning in order to maintain interest, with inventive ways of extending children's learning being explored. Evaluation of their provision shows that they are always striving to improve; a quality that is fostered throughout the nursery.

Children achieve very well because there is a good emphasis on them establishing strengths in their personal, social and emotional development from the very first day at the nursery. Children are involved and active participants in all activities. Children are able to take a lead role in organising their play and adapting role play situations. They are learning to value each other and to appreciate the differences between individuals. Children learn about different customs, people and places via topics which celebrate a vast range of festivals, holidays and many other cultures. Children access resources independently and help each other in their play, for example when reaching for different utensils in the kitchen. Children explore their feelings through stories and are helped to understand the emotions of others, sharing memories of when they may have felt the same, for example when happy or worried. This encourages children to feel secure and confident in the nursery and to know that they are in a setting where their feelings and ideas will be given careful and sensitive consideration. Children have very good opportunities to grow in confidence and to develop self-esteem by helping at snack, lunch and tidy-up time, by accessing resources on their own and by making choices during free play time.

Children are becoming confident and proficient in communicating their ideas and thoughts in language. They listen well at circle and story time and are able to follow instructions. Children skilfully negotiate as they take it in turns to ask questions about the story, which staff expertly relate to past events. They discuss their recent visit to the pet store, recalling their experiences and sharing them with the group. Children are exposed to a wealth of opportunities to revisit past events through engaging conversation with staff and their peers. They are able to recognise the beginning and end of a story, understand sequencing such as in the days of the week, confidently distinguishing between yesterday, today and tomorrow, and they use language to explore meanings and sounds. They are learning to link letter sounds and to recognise their own names on the self registration board and as they type on the computer. The emphasis on letter sounds is abundant in the nursery and children have lots of opportunities to revisit it during free play, snack time and planned activities. For example children are able to say whose name begins with a certain letter at registration and to then associate that letter with the written form when finding their wrist band ready for the visit. Staff help children to further expand their ideas during play and encourage them to express their thoughts and ideas in discussion, circle time chats and generally during the sessions.

Children have daily opportunities to practice mark making, to write their names on their own work. This is further extended as they take chalks outside and write on the floor or to practice their letter formation as they write in sand. A wealth of labels and writing around the nursery supports children in learning to recognise familiar words and names. Children may practice writing in the mark making area which is often changed to create different role play situations, for example as a post office, shop or vets.

Number skills are developed through a variety of games and everyday opportunities which encourage children to count, to find out about shapes and to understand simple calculations such as how many children are sitting at the dining table and how many more knives or forks they will need. Children are familiar with triangles and rectangles and have made their own models with these shapes clearly demonstrating their understanding of 3D models. This is demonstrated further in junk modelling and salt dough baking as they create 'hedgehog' bread. Maths language is evident in play and children talk confidently about their dough models being bigger, longer or wider. Children demonstrate that they are able to sort, count and sequence during planned activities and via access to resources during free play. The maths programme is supported by a good range of resources that include programmable toys such as calculators, mobile phones and tills.

Children receive plenty of opportunities to learn about the world about them via the range of topics planned by staff. These make very good use of the local environment and enable children to make sense of where they live. A recycling point has been set up in the nursery and children collect items from home, filling up the bins with various types of materials. They then take these to the recycling points where they learn about their environment and the differences between man-made and natural objects. Furthermore they learn about the seasons, the weather and the pattern of nature as well as introducing them to things that happened in the past. Children learn about the chicken's eggs that are in the incubator, explaining how in the past, they had to turn the eggs and how long they had to wait for them to hatch. Staff extend their learning as they encourage children to ask such questions as where chickens come from and where they will go once they are hatched. Children again recall past events as they discuss the hatching process, ensuring the chicks have fresh water when they hatch out of their shells, with detailed descriptions of the farm where they will eventually live. Children have explored what's in the garden and on the nature trails, making observations about the wildlife they have seen on the way, sometimes capturing those moments on camera as they take pictures. Inside they observe the caterpillar hanging from the twig, noting its skin texture and exploring ideas of what it will look like when it emerges into a beautiful butterfly.

Children enjoy expressing their creativity through a variety of media. Children are able to revisit their works of art as they all have work displayed on the walls and hanging from the ceiling. The nursery is bright and welcoming with a well designed display and designated use of different areas which change according to the time of year and the topics being explored. Music and singing feature daily in the nursery routine and children have independent access to a good range of instruments during free play. Planned music sessions are catered for each week as children listen to the piano or pretend to be rockets as they move to music. Children are introduced to a variety of media and different ways of using them. Bonfire pictures are made out of twigs and tissue paper with Catherine wheels created using pipe cleaners. Children take photos of themselves and the things that interest them and these are displayed at child-height for them to enjoy and share with parents and carers.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are treated with equal concern and are highly valued and respected as individuals. They have excellent opportunities to develop an understanding of the wider society because the setting introduces the children to different people in their local neighbourhood, the wider multicultural society and provides an extensive range of resources and activities that help them to develop an understanding of diversity. Children's individual needs are identified and met extremely well. Children with disabilities are very well supported and children and staff are able

to adapt their practice confidently to ensure the inclusion of all children. Strategies are in place to identify and support children with individual specific needs. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is exemplary in proportion to their level of understanding and maturity, because staff create an environment that encourages children to respect boundaries and begin to control their own behaviour. Children understand clear and consistent guidelines and expectations of behaviour such as staying together when out on the road, knowing that it will make their mummies' sad if they became lost. They play harmoniously together and are learning to share and to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Staff are excellent role models and promote children's confidence and self esteem through positive praise and encouragement.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents speak highly about the quality of the provision, and the approachability and knowledge of the staff. They receive information about their children's progress both through daily conversations with staff, parents evenings and informal social occasions such as cheese and wine events. They are provided with in-depth information about the setting through the many notice boards and bright displays.

The nursery provides excellent information to parents about the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and encourages parents to participate fully in their child's learning. Planning is displayed on notice boards and every activity in the setting states what children are learning and which areas of the curriculum are covered. Clear and attractive displays help parents become more familiar with the activities and themes in relation to the curriculum. This keeps parents fully informed and suggests how parents can continue children's learning at home. Parents involvement is further extended as they are free to take books home from the interesting and large display kept in reception. The partnership with parents ensures continuity between home and nursery, so that children settle well and achieve their full potential.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children play in an extremely well-organised environment where excellent adult support makes children feel secure and confident. This allows children to learn and develop extremely well and easily meet their full potential. The excellent use of time means that children are always involved in stimulating and worthwhile activities that support their learning and social development.

All documentation is in place and extremely well maintained. All staff have the opportunity to attend training and the very detailed induction for new staff ensures that all adults are fully prepared to carry out their role within the nursery. Regular appraisals and reviews support staff and help to identify training needs.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The manager is highly experienced and extremely proactive, ensuring all aspects of the nursery run smoothly. She is amazingly well organised and effectively leads a team of dedicated and enthusiastic staff. Well thought out aims for the nursery reflect total dedication and commitment to improving all outcomes for children. Their proactive and thorough operational plan has a vision for their setting which is to 'constantly strive for improvements to the quality of care and pre school education for the children'. This is evident and exudes from the delightful, caring staff and management. Constant communication means staff can devise individual aims for each child's development and learning. Continuous monitoring of the teaching and the careful evaluation of activities enable staff to enhance the



learning experiences for children. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection the setting was required to improve in two areas. Firstly, they were asked to request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. Systems are now in place to ensure that consent for emergency medical treatment is requested for both parents of the nursery and of the crèche. This ensures that children's welfare is promoted should an incident occur and emergency medical treatment is required. Finally, the setting were required to increase visual aids and information to ensure that children and parents who speak English as an additional language are made to feel welcome and included. The setting caters for many children who speak English as an additional language and great efforts have been made to ensure they and their parents or carers are included. They are welcomed into the setting with displays of key words in their home language and presentations of festivals they are celebrating such as Chinese New Year. Throughout the nursery, poems and songs are displayed in various languages and this also helps to include children and their families.

### **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 outstanding. 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 MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

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

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