

Fern Hollow Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY308455
Inspection date	18/06/2009
Inspector	Janet Fairhurst

Setting address	4 Birches Nook Road, STOCKSFIELD, Northumberland, NE43 7PA
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Fern Hollow Day Nursery has been registered since May 2005. In January 2008, it was taken over by the current owner. The nursery operates from a converted building in the rural village of Stockfield. A maximum of 38 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 53 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children come from the local and wider community.

The nursery employs nine members of staff to work directly with the children all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. Children's welfare is positively promoted and they are happy and settled in the stimulating and well-maintained environment. They are well cared for by consistent and responsive key-workers who meet children's individual needs effectively and provide a good range of continuous learning opportunities. Staff have established effective systems for the observation and assessment of children's learning and development. They have a positive approach to inclusion and have established good partnerships with parents to ensure the needs of all children are effectively met. Regular self-evaluation ensures that the nursery has a good capacity to maintain continuous improvement and that any priorities for future development are promptly identified and acted on.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- continue to develop the links with others delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to share relevant information ensuring consistency and continuity
- provide babies and younger children with regular opportunities to explore and investigate natural and everyday objects
- strengthen the systems of observation further by recording the links made to the areas of learning.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management are good. The manager, owner and staff work closely to monitor the quality and effectiveness of the provision. They have an accurate view of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement to bring about specific and the most needed improvements. They plan effectively for change and their capacity to improve is very good. For example, work has already been completed to enhance the outdoor play areas and menus for children have been greatly improved. The recommendations made at the last inspection have been fully met. The delivery of the EYFS is led by well-qualified and experienced staff and as a result, children are making good progress.

Staff have established a good partnership with parents. Parents are valued as partners and regular verbal communication as well as written policies and daily diaries ensure there is a good exchange of information. Staff are pro-active in encouraging parental involvement in the setting, for example, one parent regularly visits the nursery to teach children Spanish and a grandparent has been actively involved in the improvements made to the outdoor area. The views of parents are actively sought through questionnaires, discussions and a comments box, and any actions identified are fully considered. Staff are developing links with other childcare and education providers to ensure that children's needs are met and there is continuity in their learning.

Safeguarding is good. Children are cared for in a well-maintained environment where comprehensive risk assessments are used effectively to minimise hazards to children. Systems to ensure children's health and safety are in place, such as registration systems, accident and medication procedures. A comprehensive range of policies ensures a safe and effective operational plan. A number of staff have attended safeguarding training and hold current paediatric first aid certificates thus securely protecting children's welfare. Clear recruitment procedures ensure safe and suitably qualified staff who are experienced in meeting the needs of young children. Newly appointed staff undertake an induction, which ensures they are aware of the nursery's policies and procedures as well as their individual responsibilities within the setting. Staff are secure in their knowledge of safeguarding children and are aware of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns regarding a child in their care.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff have a good understanding of the EYFS welfare requirements and promote children's welfare effectively. They have established an effective system of planning that is flexible and responds to children's interests and ideas. The key person system ensures there are effective methods for observation and assessment and that staff can identify the next steps in children's learning. Staff gather information about children's individual care needs by talking with parents and have established a system for identifying children's starting points. They record children's achievements in each child's individual file and with the addition of photographs and narrative observations are able to track children's progress

successful. Although the staff are very clear themselves which area of learning is being covered they do not always record the links to the photographs or the written observations.

Children enjoy assisting with daily tasks such as tidying away equipment and practise their counting skills as they decide how many plates they need as they help to prepare the tables for lunchtime. Children are independent and older children confidently pour their own drinks, which are available to them throughout the day. Some children recognise their names and older children are beginning to recognise the sounds that different letters make. They have many opportunities to mark make, including drawing, making marks in sand and using the paint brushes and water while playing in the garden. They enjoy stories and looking at books on their own and in small groups.

Babies are inquisitive and confidently explore the range of toys set out, however, on the day of the inspection little evidence of natural, everyday objects and play resources were available to them. Staff encourage babies' early communication skills as they look at books together and talk to them whilst at the same time responding appropriately to their gestures and sounds. Staff use effective questioning to encourage children to think and express themselves. For example, when listening to the differing sounds that the rice makes when poured onto a hard surface, they ask the children what it sounds like and praise them for their inventive descriptions.

The provision of technology resources including a laptop and mouse ensures children learn how to use these to interact successfully with age appropriate software and games. For the younger children interactive, cause and effect toys encourage their curiosity and problem solving skills. Outdoor play is a central feature of the nursery day. Children are able to access this area in all weathers as staff provide them with waterproof suits and wellies, which help to develop a positive approach to being outdoors in the fresh air. Innovative ideas and resources outdoor provide children with good opportunities to observe, explore and become interested by the natural world.

A once unused steep grassed sloop has been re-designed to incorporate steps, which the children climb. This provides children with a very different perceptive of height as they observe panoramic views over the village and at the same time experience a sense of adventure, which allows them to take calculated safe risks necessary to learn important life skills. The introduction of the vegetable garden allows children to grow their own produce helping them to understand where food comes from. They take on responsibilities to water the plants, which is taken from the water butt thus also developing their awareness of recycling. Children are actively encouraged to develop an understanding of how to stay safe and healthy through the varied range of activities and the effective implementation of procedures staff follow. Children are offered a range of freshly prepared, nutritional snacks and meals and consistent daily routines ensure they develop healthy personal care routines.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met