

Free Spirits Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	319181
Inspection date	10/08/2009
Inspector	Cathryn Parry

Setting address	Freeman Hospital, Freeman Road, High Heaton, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE7 7DN
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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).

Description of the setting

Free Spirits Nursery registered in 1999. It is owned and managed by Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital's National Health Service Foundation Trust, to provide childcare primarily for staff working for the trust. It operates from six rooms in a pre-fabricated building, which is situated within the Freeman Hospital complex, in the High Heaton area of Newcastle upon Tyne. Children have access to two enclosed outdoor play areas. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year, excluding bank holidays.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 88 children in the early years age range. There are currently 125 children attending in this age group. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 27 permanent members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ level 3. One member of staff is commencing Early Years Professional Status training in September and 16 members of staff are working towards NVQ level 4 qualifications. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. All the staff offer a really warm and friendly welcome to children, parents and visitors. The wide range of experiences provided ensures all children have opportunities to make good progress. Systems for observing children are continually being reviewed. The staff have a range of experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language. They have attended a variety of associated training and link closely with other professionals to provide an inclusive environment. Communication with other Early Years Foundation Stage providers is being developed. The staff demonstrate a commitment to furthering their professional development and liaise with the childcare coordinator from the local authority. This results in the setting continuously improving.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to develop systems for observing and assessing children's progress
- further develop systems to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing relevant information with other practitioners where a child receives education and care in more than one setting.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting is managed by two managers who job share. They work very well together, complementing each others strengths. The managers and their team evaluate the care and education they provide well. Clear action plans are in place and fund raising activities carried out to further develop the high quality service offered. Feedback is gained from parents and the children, which gives a broader view of the provision. All recommendations raised at the previous inspection have been positively addressed, which positively impacts on children's overall well-being. The manager present on the day of the inspection identifies the main strength of the setting as being the enthusiastic staff and their commitment to providing excellent childcare. She is realistic in her understanding that all providers can improve and discusses how they are currently focusing on developing the outdoor area.

Extremely strong links with parents have been forged. Staff spend time daily talking to them to ensure they are fully aware of the activities their children have enjoyed. This is complemented with the setting having a parent's forum, regular newsletters, effective informative displays and open evenings. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning in a variety of ways. Examples of this are where they borrow story sacks, share their own expertise in the setting and bring items in to supplement topics being followed. There are only a few children who access care and education in more than one setting offering the Early Years Foundation Stage. Links have been made with some of these providers, however not with all. This has a negative impact on ensuring continuity and coherence.

The manager present on the day of the inspection is really keen and enthusiastic about the welfare of the children and giving them the best opportunities to progress in a safe environment. A very robust recruitment procedure ensures all staff have suitable qualifications, experience and are carefully vetted to effectively promote children's well-being. Regular individual staff appraisals ensure their ongoing suitability. All staff have attended safeguarding training and demonstrate an exceptional understanding of related issues. Consequently, children are protected extremely well. Comprehensive risk assessments take place daily and clearly reduce the chance of accidental injury.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

All staff demonstrate a really good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and implement it well. They offer very good levels of help and support to ensure that all children receive maximum enjoyment out of the activities. Children are gaining an understanding of responsible behaviour, as a consistent approach by staff is employed. They develop a sensitive awareness of diversity and an understanding of the needs of others. This is achieved through a range of activities and resources, which promote a positive outlook of the wider world. Daily calendar activities develop children's understanding of the passage of time. They use information and communication technology to support their learning, for example

when enjoying interactive toys and computer games. Children's communication skills are fostered well, resulting in competent speakers and listeners. They also have the opportunity to learn French. Children have a growing understanding of the living world through a variety of well-planned and spontaneous activities. These include planting and nurturing herbs and observing caterpillars changing into butterflies. A wide range of creative activities are provided, which promote children's self-expression whilst having fun. These include painting with a variety of materials, making faces out of pebbles and manipulating clay and play dough. Children confidently count along with staff in everyday play and some children are keen to show that they understand number concepts. Staff plan really well following children's interests. They carefully ensure all areas of learning are covered whilst letting the children lead the play. The format of children's individual files is being reviewed. Currently, they include observations and link to the areas of learning. However, these observations are not always dated and do not clearly show progress towards the early learning goals. Consequently, it is not easy to track children's achievements.

Children are kept very secure through highly effective procedures for entry to the building. The excellent organisation of space and the unmistakably high levels of support provided by the staff, allow children to move around safely and independently. This helps them to retain a balance of freedom and safe limits. Children are cared for in a really clean and comfortable environment, where they are beginning to develop an understanding of good hygiene and personal care. Imaginatively planned activities and visits by professionals successfully nurture children's understanding of good lifestyle habits. These include regular yoga sessions and visits by a dental nurse. A clear sickness policy offers parents information about exclusion periods for children who are unwell, ensuring children are not placed at risk of infection and illness. Children flourish as they access excellent opportunities for physical play. They develop and test their physical skills extremely well through really stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences. Children are active or restful through choice and babies sleep in-line with their individual needs and parent's wishes. All children's well-being is enriched through accessing a highly nutritious and balanced diet. Children have a growing awareness of healthy food options, which is fostered through animated discussions with staff. All relevant documentation with regard to health, including specific dietary needs and consent forms are in place and up to date. These positively safeguard children's well-being.

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?	1

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?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
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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