

Spotted Dog Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY298397
Inspection date	02/09/2009
Inspector	Carys Millican
Setting address	Clawthorpe Hall Business Centre, Clawthorpe, Carnforth, Lancashire, LA6 1NU
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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.

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Description of the setting

Spotted Dog Children's Centre is privately owned. It moved into a designated nursery unit within Clawthorpe Hall Business Centre in 2005 which is situated in the parish of Burton-in-Kendal, near to the town of Kendal in Cumbria. A maximum of 50 early years children may attend the centre at any one time. The provision is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 107 children aged from birth to under eight years on roll. The setting gets funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four. Children come from the nearby villages and the local towns of Carnforth and Kendal. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The centre employs 16 staff, 14 staff who work directly with the children hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The manager holds Early Years Professional Status and a Degree in Primary Teaching. The setting is a member of the National Day Nursery Association and is registered on the Early Years Register, and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Spotted Dog Children Centre successfully promotes children's ongoing progress and development through the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing children with an excellent start in their learning. Staff recognise from an early age children's unique qualities, capabilities and individual interests in order to provide an interesting, stimulating and an inclusive environment within safe, secure and well resourced play areas. Children are supported well by a team of well motivated nursery practitioners who ensure learning is fun and enjoyable. Excellent opportunities are used to create effective partnerships with parents, other agencies and local schools within the community which totally enhance the children's time at the setting and supports children's progress and learning. The management have a clear vision for embedding ambition and driving improvement through the self-evaluation processes that are effectively used to ensure the ongoing development and continuous improvement of this valued setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- update the safeguarding and complaints policy in line with the statutory requirement within the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The management place a strong emphasis on safeguarding and make sure children are protected whilst in their care. Robust safeguarding policies and procedures are effectively implemented by designated staff who fully understand their role and responsibility having attended specialist training in child protection. A detailed set of policies and procedures that ensure the smooth running of the setting are available for parents and staff in the reception area. Most of these policies have been reviewed recently, however, the complaint policy and the safeguarding policy require updating in line with guidance in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Rigorous recruitment procedures ensure children are cared for by suitable persons and staff's ongoing suitability is addressed through full induction procedures, probationary periods, and annual appraisals. Detailed risk assessments and rigorous health and safety practices ensure children are safe indoors, outside, and on outings. There are visual and written checklists completed before children arrive and before they use areas of the building, such as outside. Safety equipment and procedures ensure the safety of children on the premises, during arrival and collection times.

The manager is a highly motivated and experienced practitioner who has a clear vision and has detailed plans for future improvement of the setting to improve the outcomes for children. She supports staff's personal development to ensure children are well cared for by highly qualified practitioners, who are clear about their job roles and responsibilities and work well as a team. Staff are highly committed to improving their knowledge and everyday practice by regularly attending core subject training sessions and additional courses. Staff apply their new found learning to instigate changes within the environment and in children's routines, therefore children thrive in this exciting, interesting and stimulating environment. Staff share this invaluable information with other staff members through cascade training sessions at staff meetings. The manager provides staff with computer systems to keep in touch with information on the Early Years Foundation Stage which helps with observation, assessment and planning for children's individual learning.

Effective systems are in place to obtain feedback from parents, staff and children who are regularly consulted in a number of ways. This information informs the setting's action plan and self-evaluation processes. The manager is confident about the strengths of the setting and the areas for improvement and actions taken to improve are well targeted and rigorous. Staff continually monitor and review the planning, environment and what they offer the children, parents and carers to ensure inclusive practice is maintained. The setting has established highly positive relationships with parents and carers ensuring each child's needs are well met. Parents feel they are fully involved in their child's learning completing 'All about me' documents and they are kept well informed about their children's achievement, welfare and development. Staff encourage parents to support children's learning at home. This effective liaison contributes to children's good progress and ongoing development. The setting has established excellent links with other educational settings children attend. This not only enables the setting to

complement the learning taking place but also enables the smooth transition into the local schools for all children.

Children are well supported by staff in the setting. The building and learning environment is accessible, inclusive and welcoming. The manager and staff effectively promote equality of opportunity and work with parents and other agencies to support children's diverse needs. Children, parents and carers feel valued and develop a sense of belonging. They are warmly welcomed into the setting by staff who take the time to talk to them about their child and include them in all aspects of the provision. Children's work is creatively displayed and resources are accessible to aid independence, choice and decision making. Positive images, resources and activities support children's understanding of difference and diversity of the world around them.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are happy, confident, independent individuals who enjoy their time spent at the setting. They benefit from the care, activities and play opportunities provided by qualified practitioners who have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how children learn best. The key worker system implemented throughout the setting ensures children form strong attachment with persons who know them well and are conscious of their individual needs to support them to achieve good outcomes. Staff help children prepare for life by providing a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities in each room that help children develop a positive attitude to learning from the earliest age. Children play in spacious, well resourced playrooms where they can independently access suitable age-appropriate resources. These are stored in labelled containers in low level storage units within language rich continuous play areas. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff monitor children's play and planning is sufficiently flexible to allow for spontaneous events so staff can respond to children's ideas and interests. For example, staff observed children's enjoyment playing with cars outside. This interest was developed into the planning looking at transport. Staff complete observations as children play which identify the next steps in their learning and inform future planning. Staff constantly monitor the environment and routines to ensure all children are included and their individual needs are well met. They use information from training sessions in the setting to improve practice, for example, by introducing planning boards for children and making resources themselves.

Children show a great sense of achievement as the staff constantly praise them for their efforts. They are very well-behaved as they play together or take part in social activities, such as circle time. They listen to each other and respect each other's comments. Learning experiences are skilfully promoted in everyday activities and routines. Children follow instructions, confidently count the number of children present and put on their coats before going outdoors. Staff follow consistent behaviour management techniques so children know what is expected of them and therefore display positive behaviour.

Children have fun and enjoyment. They enjoy mark making and creative activities. Children learn about number, shape and colour in everyday routines. They use their name card to practise the formation of letters and the sound it makes. Children competently use tools to create their picture and confidently describe it to their key worker. Their creativity and imagination are extensively well developed. Children access construction materials, such as bricks, cogs and wheels. They can follow patterns to make models and develop their own. Babies and young children experience numerous sensory and heuristic play opportunities. They thrive on the one-to-one interaction they receive as they use their senses to explore their surroundings and the treasure baskets containing natural materials. Children enjoy looking at themselves in the low level mirrors developing a sense of their own identity. They enjoy listening to stories and singing nursery rhymes. Staff skilfully extend children's learning by challenging them and using open-ended questioning. This encourages children to think for themselves and promotes language and communication skills.

All children develop a positive attitude to being active and undertaking daily physical activity. Staff create an indoor-outdoor environment. Plans are displayed showing the ongoing development of this well developed and excellently resourced play area. Children competently manoeuvre bikes and cars round strategically placed cones with ease and take calculated risks as they play. They climb the large tree trunk laid on the bark safety surface. Staff support them and remind them to keep themselves safe by taking good footings and only jumping off when it is clear to. Staff support children in all activities constantly praising them thus boosting self-esteem and confidence. Children develop a strong sense of security. They are confident in the company of adults and very self-assured. Returning pre-school children settle into the routine very easily after a six week break during the summer.

Children understand the importance of healthy living, hygiene practices and healthy lifestyles. Staff encourage independence and self-help skills in everyday routines. Children help set tables and pour their own milk. Children wash their hands using soap before mealtimes and state that 'if they don't, they have germs on and I will get a poorly tummy'. They access low level sinks which aid their independence. Paper towel and paper products are recycled by children placing them in the recycling bucket. The welfare of the children is of paramount importance to the staff. Children learn safe practices when out walking and the fire drill is practised regularly. Children enjoy sitting together to eat their healthy snack and benefit from wholesome cooked meals prepared on site by designated housekeeping staff. Packed lunches are stored appropriately and staff discuss healthy contents with parents. Staff encourage children to drink plenty of fresh water during the day with water or milk at mealtimes.

The learning environment both inside and outside is highly welcoming, inclusive, accessible, safe, and well adapted to meet individual needs. Children's understanding of difference and diversity is suitably addressed throughout the setting where children can look at books, photographic displays, welcome posters and access resources. Planning and photographic evidence shows how the setting celebrates festivals and special events. They ensure children learn to value and

respect each other's similarities and differences, and develop an understanding of the diverse world they live in.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	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