



Fern Hollow Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY308455
Inspection date	29 September 2005
Inspector	Karen Ling

Setting Address	4 Birches Nook Road, Stocksfield, Northumberland, NE43 7JL
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Telephone number	01661 842717
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E-mail

Registered person	Fern Hollow Limited
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Full day care
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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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Fern Hollow Day Nursery is a private day care facility. It was first established in 1985 and was re-registered with the new owner in April 2005. The premises are situated in a residential area of Stocksfield. The nursery takes children from the village and surrounding areas.

It is registered to take up to 38 children from birth to eight years of age. It is open Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year from 08.00 until 18.00 There are currently 47 children on roll. Of these, three are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs.

There are 15 members of staff who work directly with the children of whom 12 hold appropriate qualifications in childcare and education. The nursery also receives qualified teacher support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children begin to learn about basic hygiene routines, such as washing hands before eating and they happily sing the 'hand washing' song together. Some children can not reach the sinks, soap or towels and are overly directed by adults at times which hinders their independence. Most hygiene routines followed by practitioners are satisfactory overall, though routines in place for cleaning the toilet areas and ensuring bedding is clean are not rigorous in practice.

Children learn about their bodies and what they can do, for example as they play ring games together and run about outside. The older children take part in an adult directed yoga activity once a week. Babies have a selection of toys available to them which they show interest in and are taken outside for fresh air most days. Overall activities on offer to children are limited and they do not engage in sufficient physical activity with the support of adults. Children are able to take regular drinks if they choose. A suitable variety of meals and snacks are provided which are generally nutritious and meet individual dietary needs.

Sleep and eating routines are in place for the babies. However, because babies follow nursery routines this leads to them being unsettled and their individual needs including individual sleep patterns are not facilitated. At lunch time appropriate adult interaction is not consistently sufficient. As a result, babies become unhappy and often have to wait to be comforted.

The Birth to three matters framework has recently been introduced. As yet staff have a weak knowledge and understanding of how to implement it effectively. Relationships with staff are satisfactory and at times good. However on occasions interaction and children's well being, particularly with the babies is compromised.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children receive a warm and friendly welcome and overall are confident and settled in the setting. They are grouped according to age and although this works well in part, the organization of space does not ensure that all children have sufficient space or can access the necessary facilities for a range of activities. As a result children do

not engage in sufficient stimulating activities and play.

In the main the environment is safe and secure and staff generally follow the settings policies and procedures to minimize risks. However, systems for monitoring access to and from the premises are not rigorously followed. The manager has identified aspects of the environment which pose a hazard to young children, for example the low wooden partitions but as yet has not addressed this weakness. This means that at times children's safety is compromised.

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of child protection issues however, the policy does not contain all the necessary procedures to follow where there are concerns about child abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Young children are beginning to develop friendly relationships with their carers and take part in a variety of activities during the day. They explore dough, paint and water and show developing dexterity, for example as they thread beads onto laces. Staff take time to read stories to children and at times give support as they help children to develop skills such as cutting. Children play together in groups and are able to complete activities on their own if they choose. One child for example, showed good concentration and perseverance as she painted a picture of a hedgehog. Young children are excited when the role play equipment and dressing up clothes are set out for them, but these resources are not available often enough. Children are not enabled to build on their own play ideas because of a lack of equipment to support their games and the over direction of some adults.

They are beginning to show developing social skills as they learn to take turns and share equipment, though these skills are not consistently or effectively reinforced by staff to help children consider each others needs. At times children wander aimlessly with little direction from staff. At other times, activities, such as the daily television programme do not provide appropriate challenge for some children. As a result older children are not able to listen and concentrate. Overall children do not receive sufficient choice throughout the day because of the lack of a good range of toys and equipment which they can access independently.

The deployment of staff working with the under two's, together with the rigid routines do not ensure there is sufficient time to talk and play with babies and toddlers. The limited space and resources does not enable them to explore their surroundings sufficiently using their senses and physical skills. As a result, progress is hindered.

Staff have begun to make plans and keep records since the introduction of the Birth to three matters framework. As yet these do not impact positively on the provision for the under three's because some staff do not have a good grasp of how young children learn and develop most effectively.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Staff do not set high enough expectations of what children can achieve and at times teaching is ineffective. As a result children's progress is limited. Some staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the Foundation Stage while others have a weak understanding of how young children learn best. Staff have begun to develop plans to ensure all six areas of learning are included. However, learning intentions of activities are not clear. There is too little to capture children's interest and activities and experiences are not well enough matched to children's needs, including those with special educational needs, to provide a suitable level of challenge. As a result some practitioner effort is put into supervising rather than promoting learning through activities. This leads to an overly adult directed environment, with little opportunity for children to make choices of their own. Time and resources are not used effectively to support learning. Children have little access to a range of role play resources for example, or equipment which they can use to develop their own ideas. The assessment system shows children's progress in relation to the stepping stones. However, information about children's achievements is not effectively used to plan what they need to learn next.

Children engage in the activities on offer. They enjoy listening to stories and show an interest in books when they are set out by staff. The selection is limited and this affects their ability to enjoy books independently and find out information. Children show early counting skills and are able to sort objects according to size and colour. They are not sufficiently encouraged to apply counting skills in purposeful and meaningful ways in practical contexts, such as daily routines. Nor are they supported to develop and use appropriate mathematical language or simple calculation. Children enjoy exploring the sand, water and corn flour mix with their hands. However, they are not challenged to use their senses to investigate why things happen and how things work or develop an awareness of technology in every day life. Insufficient time, space and appropriate materials are provided for children to explore different ways of cutting, joining and building for their own purposes. Children enjoy using the small equipment and wheeled toys during outdoor play. However, staff do not ensure that they build on existing skills or develop new ones through a range of challenging situations. Children have insufficient time to play freely using their imagination using construction materials or in role play situations for example. They are not sufficiently enabled to develop their own ideas by exploring a range of media, music and movement.

Children behave well generally, are compliant to the request of staff and follow the routine of the day confidently. However, staff do not consistently set clear boundaries, for example for sharing equipment when playing outdoors and this results in children not being helped to understand the needs of others.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children are settled within the group and overall staff are attentive to most of their needs. They are developing a sense of their own needs, such as when they need a drink and are familiar the routine of the day. Most play alongside each other well with adult support. At times individual levels of understanding and maturity are not

supported most effectively by staff, for example when young children need to wash their hands and move from one area to another. Staff complete the hand washing procedure for them and move them around with no explanation to help them understand what is happening. Schedules and routines for the babies do not necessarily follow individual needs.

Overall adult support does not help children contribute effectively because staff do not sufficiently help them to know their capabilities and make choices and decisions. Consequently children's confidence and self-assurance is not encouraged well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered appropriately. Children within the group with special needs do not consistently receive appropriate support and learning opportunities because staff do not have the necessary procedures and systems for monitoring progress. Individual records are not systematic or routine. Relationships with parents are friendly and staff use the beginning and end of sessions to share information verbally.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff have worked hard to develop relationships with parents. They keep parents informed on a daily basis about what children have done. Monthly newsletters and parents evenings have been introduced and parents speak positively about how well they are kept informed both formally and informally.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The nursery is organized to accommodate children in different age groups and the manager endeavours to maintain staff ratios at all times. However, the organisation of care does not meet children's needs or regulatory requirements. Group size of babies and some young children in the space available does not positively support their care, learning and play. The manager has introduced a number of new initiatives to the operational plan. She is committed to ongoing professional development through training which staff attend. She identifies some areas for development and in the main acts on them. Staff are beginning to implement the newly introduced policies, procedures, planning and record keeping though they are not followed rigorously throughout the nursery. Not all the necessary detail is contained in the Child Protection statement and the special needs statement does not have regard to the Code of Practice. Currently the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Some staff have attended training for Birth to three matters, and the framework has recently been introduced into the nursery. Staff's knowledge and understanding of the framework has yet to be consolidated in order for it to have a positive impact on the quality of care for the under three's.

Leadership and management are inadequate. The manager sets high expectations for her staff, however systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are not sufficiently rigorous. As a result children do not receive a curriculum which is of a satisfactory level.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure staff are informed and aware of the importance of good hygiene routines
- ensure feeding and sleep patterns for the under two's take place in accordance with the child's individual needs and not as part of a nursery routine
- ensure minimum space standards for the whole provision are met at all times
- ensure systems for monitoring access to and from the premises are effective
- conduct a risk assessment to identify potential hazards and take appropriate action
- ensure the child protection statement includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer
- improve the provision of suitable resources in each area; organize resources so that they are readily accessible to children
- ensure the individual needs of children with special needs are met and regularly monitor and assess their progress

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure all staff set high expectations of what children can do and that all areas of learning within the curriculum provide appropriate and sufficient challenge
- provide a good balance of adult directed and self initiated activities which are well resourced to support learning and enable children to make choices and develop their own ideas
- ensure the special educational needs policy has regard to the Code of Practice and that all staff understand how to give appropriate support
- ensure systems which monitor the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous and effective.

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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