



## **Fern Hollow Day Nursery**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY308455
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 July 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Karen Ling

<b>Setting Address</b>	4 Birches Nook Road, Stocksfield, Northumberland, NE43 7JL
------------------------	--

<b>Telephone number</b>	01661 842717
-------------------------	--------------

**E-mail**

<b>Registered person</b>	Fern Hollow 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### 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

52 children on roll. Of these, 11 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

There are 12 members of staff who work directly with the children of whom 9 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 satisfactory.

Children's routines and daily activities help to promote their health. Older children know and follow health and hygiene routines and are beginning to understand how to keep themselves healthy. For example, they can access washing facilities with little or no help. Staff remind children as necessary to wash hands after visiting the bathroom and before eating. During hot weather sun cream is applied and children are encouraged to wear sun hats. They play in the shadier areas of the garden and stay indoors at the hottest parts of the day.

The individual sleep and eating routines of babies and very young children are followed. Relationships with adults are good. Children show enthusiasm, as they take an interest in the suitable range of activities on offer and staff help these children to cope with challenging situations, such as playing in the sand and water trays. As a result, the children are calm, relaxed and settled for much of their time at the nursery. Linen is changed daily and steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection, such as regular cleansing of equipment and resources. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure children are well taken care of if they are ill. However, very occasionally, written permission has not been obtained from parents before administering medication.

Children are interested and take part in a range of suitable physical activities in the nursery garden, on walks in the vicinity and on visits to the local parks. Older children show agility as they climb and manoeuvre themselves in and out of equipment. They learn to balance and hop as they play games together, such as hopscotch, and use a range of small equipment including bats and balls with increasing skill. Younger children and babies benefit from their time playing in the garden. They show interest in their outdoor environment. For example, they use their senses to smell the flowers, listen to the birds, watch aeroplanes fly overhead and feel the different textures, such as grass and wood. Toddlers show increasing awareness of their environment, as they move around freely from one activity to another. They manoeuvre the push and ride wheeled toys and rockers very well with staff giving support to ensure all children are included in activities. Hand to eye co-ordination is encouraged effectively through activities, such as making sand castles. Some children repeatedly scoop and fill buckets with sand, form a castle and gleefully knock it over, laugh and start again.

Children enjoy meal and snack times which are a social occasion where staff sit with children. A suitable variety of meals and snacks are provided which are generally nutritious and meet individual dietary and religious needs. Children enjoy fresh fruit at

snack times and the menu for meal times is rotated on a four week basis. Older children are able to choose their portions with adult support and children can choose more if they wish. They regularly help themselves throughout the day to water from the dispenser. Fruit juice is also offered at lunch times and milk at snack times. Babies and toddlers sit together at lunch times. However, staff deployment does not ensure that the preparation of food for those children under two is coordinated effectively. As a result, on occasions some babies become a little unsettled as they wait for their food.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and relaxed in the setting for much of their time. Staff are friendly and welcoming and help children to settle into the routine of the day. A key worker system operates within the nursery. This enables babies and young children to develop a caring relationship with key members of staff. They know when to ask for help and are well protected and are kept safe with appropriate adult support. Staff have recently received safety awareness training and know that it is their responsibility to be rigorous about children's whereabouts at all times.

The indoor environment has been arranged to provide two main play areas. This ensures that children under two years and those over two years have good play spaces and in the main they can move about freely and safely. The book area outside the office door is not organised most effectively and poses a hazard. The nursery has a satisfactory range of equipment and resources for the ages of children cared for. Storage has been introduced at child level, which increases children's ability to access a range of suitable toys independently. Staff continue to look at ways of developing independent access, particularly within the nursery education provision. The outdoor play spaces are enclosed and provide safe places for children to play when under the careful supervision of staff.

Children know and comply with safety procedures and are beginning to understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they practise emergency evacuation procedures from time to time. Practitioners have a sound knowledge and understanding of childcare and follow the settings acceptable policies and procedures to take appropriate steps to protect children and promote their well-being.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Young children take part in a variety of stimulating activities during the day. Staff show a good awareness of the Birth to three framework and use it to plan an interesting range of activities which are appropriate to children's ages and stages of development. Babies are encouraged to explore their environment. They reach out for objects and toys and show developing curiosity in their surroundings. Staff form close relationships with babies. They talk and sing to them and recognise when they are tired or hungry. Babies are introduced to media, such as paint and water. They

have a wonderful time exploring the properties of paint with their hands and watching it disappear, as it is washed off with water. Young children play alongside each other and staff well. They particularly enjoy it when staff sing to them and show developing skills of concentration, as they try to copy actions and attempt some words. They use wax crayons and chalks to mark make and love playing in the sand pit. Staff enthusiastically encourage children to join in by involving themselves in children's play. For example, children are shown how to build sand castles, bury their feet and laugh as they knock castles down and have their toes tickled. They are helped to do things, such as taking off their socks and shoes. In time with practise, they become independent, showing they can do some things without adult support.

## Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Plans ensure all areas of learning are covered and set out how children of different abilities will be challenged. However, in practice, staff do not set high enough expectations of what children can do. Consequently, children do not always receive enough challenge.

Social skills are developing well. Children begin to form friendships and play confidently together in small groups. Staff value their ideas and opinions and offer alternative solutions to solve disagreements. Children are well behaved generally. They learn to take turns in conversation. At circle time, they patiently wait for their turn to talk about what they have made and confidently share knowledge they have, such as what elephants use their trunks for. If they interrupt staff gently remind them to listen and wait for their turn. Children enjoy listening to stories, such as 'The bear hunt' and join in with familiar phrases. Mark making equipment is available and children show an interest in familiar words, such as their own name. However, there is insufficient space allocated for the equipment to be used effectively.

Children are developing an awareness of number concepts, as they sing number rhymes and work out simple problems. They enjoy making patterns, such as on peg boards and use mathematical language to describe three dimensional shapes, such as bigger, smaller, longer and shorter. Children show interest in the planned topics and engage in adult-led activities. They show dexterity as they use tools, such as scissors to complete tasks. However, activities do not always provide sufficient challenge and the environment does not currently lend itself to children developing their own ideas or finding out why things happen and how things work. Children are able to access some resources but activities are not sufficiently well organised, or resourced, to ensure learning is consistently promoted well. For example, there are insufficient accessible props and resources for children to develop their own ideas in role play. Staff record children's progress over time. Observations are used to help staff assess what children can do. However, these assessments are not used effectively to inform planning and ensure children are sufficiently moved on in their learning.

## Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are made to feel welcome at the nursery and are treated with equal concern. Staff know the children well and effectively help children to settle and be content. Children are actively involved and interested as they play alongside staff and peers. Routines, such as eating and sleeping, flow with the needs of young children while older children show a developing awareness of daily routines. This works well across the day on the whole. Children are actively encouraged by staff to learn by doing. For example, older children like to help to set the table at meal times. They learn to be independent as staff show them what to do and then let them try. This helps to build their self-esteem and confidence.

Staff sensitively give individual support as necessary. However, occasionally this is not this is not as effective at lunch time when babies are waiting for their food. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good levels of support and make good progress in areas of development. Staff give praise and encouragement and set achievable targets. They work closely with parents and liaise with other relevant agencies to provide continuity of care and plan next steps in learning.

Children behave well and staff set good role models. They set clear boundaries of behaviour and their explanations help children to understand why something is not acceptable. Children display good manners, with staff reminding and reinforcing 'please' and 'thank you', such as at snack time. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Detailed information is provided for parents about how the nursery operates. Planning is displayed in each area and a recent introduction is the monthly newsletter. Regular informal verbal exchange helps to keep parents informed about their children. Home diaries also keep parents of babies informed about how their needs have been met during the day. Individual records are maintained of children's development. Although parents can ask to see these any time, two meetings are held during the year where staff and parents can discuss their child's progress.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, the nursery is well organised. Managers and staff have worked hard since the last inspection. Commitment to ongoing staff training and development, together with input from development workers has enabled practitioners to reflect on their practice. This in turn has informed and developed nursery practice. Some staff have received training on the Birth to three matters framework, while others have attended Foundation Stage training. This has had a positive impact on the provision for children under three years and the nursery education provision. Practices across the nursery and particularly for those under two years have improved significantly. Planning, resources and practical support satisfactorily meet the differing needs of children overall. However, on occasions the deployment of staff at lunch times is not as effective with children under two years.

The proprietor, who is also currently the manager, acknowledges, values and supports the adults that work with babies and young children. There have been several new members of staff joining the nursery in recent months and a new manager with qualified teacher status has been employed to start in August. An emphasis is now put upon the supervision and safety of children during the induction of new staff. Documentation which is required for the management of the provision is well maintained overall. However, the nursery does not have a copy of the revisions to the National Standards of October 2005, and staff are not aware of all the relevant changes.

The layout of available space has been re-organised. Sessions are now well organised and children can move around more freely.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The manager continually seeks to improve the quality of the nursery education provision. Key staff involved in the delivery of the Foundation Stage have attended appropriate training. This has led to some improvement in the organisation of resources and planning of the curriculum. There is a commitment to ongoing training and professional development and staff work well together as a team. Planning is monitored by the manager who identifies areas for development as well as what is working well. As a result, the children now make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

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

The nursery has made good progress in addressing the care actions and satisfactory progress in addressing the nursery education actions arising from the last inspection.

Staff's awareness of health and safety issues have been raised. More rigorous procedures are now in place to monitor access to and from the premises. Staff now invite parents into the nursery, rather than talking on the doorstep and parents are reminded of this procedure. A new gate has been fitted at the end of the pathway and the bolt is inaccessible to children. Staff are more vigilant about children's whereabouts, and the need for vigilance is stressed during the induction of new staff. Risk assessments have been carried out on the areas used and daily spot checks have been introduced, which are completed before the start of the session. The barrier dividing the two play areas has been replaced with a sturdy alternative. The child protection statement has been reviewed to include the necessary detail and staff are aware of procedures. As a result, the children's safety is monitored more effectively during their time at the nursery. The organisation of play space and the storage of resources has improved. Children and staff are able to move about more freely and make independent choices from the selection of resources. Individual feeding and sleep patterns are followed with the children under two years. The policy for special educational needs has been reviewed and makes reference to the Code of Practice. Children with individual learning difficulties or disabilities are monitored

and supported well. Individual Education Plans have been established, and key staff work together with parents and outside agencies to provide appropriate care for each child. Overall, the atmosphere within the nursery is calmer and children of all ages are more settled.

Observation diaries have been introduced to identify what children are capable of doing. Planning is detailed and is monitored by the manager to check that it provides challenge. More resources are available for children to select and use in self-initiated ideas. These implementations have had a positive impact on the provision for nursery education and children make satisfactory progress. However, the curriculum continues to lack sufficient challenge and areas, such as role play, are not resourced sufficiently.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There has been one complaint made to Ofsted since the last inspection. Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 6 - Safety. A childcare inspector visited the provision on 16 May 2006. Actions were raised and satisfactorily met by the registered provider. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

## **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

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

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure parents sign to give permission for medication to be administered on every occasion
- improve the use of space outside office door to avoid accidents occurring
- improve staff deployment at lunch times for children under two years so that babies do not become unsettled as they wait for food to be prepared



- obtain a copy of the revisions to the national Standards October 2005.

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve the learning environment; ensure resources are carefully chosen and presented to stimulate children's curiosity, encourage independence and creativity, investigate and find out why things happen and how things work
- ensure the role play area is well planned with sufficient resources for children to develop good play ideas
- ensure children are offered sufficient challenge during periods of self-chosen activity
- improve opportunities for children to use mark making resources for different purposes
- improve the use of assessment to inform curriculum planning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)