

Early Learners

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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

Early Learners day care facility opened in 2006 and operates from Thornley Children's Centre in Thornley Primary School in Thornley, Durham. The registered provider is a company limited by guarantee. The provision is based within a village community. Children have access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas. The group serves the local and surrounding villages. There are small flights of stairs within the setting and access to the main door is made using a ramp.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register, and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register and a maximum of 26 children aged two to five years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 40 children on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting is in receipt of funding for early education. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm all year round.

There are six members of staff, including the manager, who work directly with the children. Of these, one has a level 4 early years qualification, three have a level 3 qualification and two have a level 2 qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children receive warm and individual care in a setting that is well resourced and meets their individual needs. The effective management structure ensures a happy and caring environment with positive practice and collaborative working being shown through the effective links with parents and the school. The process of measuring the effectiveness of the setting is ongoing and demonstrates a firm commitment to improving outcomes for children. Staff's knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage is developing well. Children's progress is recorded using observations and assessments. These, however, are not currently linked to individual learning goals.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that children's observations and assessments are matched to the expectations of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that learning priorities can be identified
- through regular routines ensure that the necessary steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding procedures are good in this setting as staff have attended training and are aware of any potential concerns regarding the care of a child. The risk assessments minimise possible risks and are regularly documented. The environment is secure and well resourced with a range of well chosen stimulating equipment which is creatively organised. Consequently, children's learning develops well through exploring and discovering new experiences. Sound strategies support children with additional needs through good practitioner knowledge and positive practice. A wide range of policies, procedures and positive practice protects children's well-being which helps children feel safe. The system for measuring the effectiveness of the setting is well established and drives forward improved provision through the restructuring of the premises. Children's assessments are developing, however, these do not consistently match individual areas of learning so that learning priorities can be identified.

Effective partnership with schools, parents and outside agencies ensure that expertise and positive practice is disseminated throughout the setting. Staff work well as a team to provide care and learning that carefully considers children's individual needs. Initial assessments as children commence at the setting makes sure that staff have detailed knowledge of the children in their care. Positive relationships are fostered due to the effective key worker system and parents value the approachability of staff, the way their views are taken into account and the regular verbal updates on progress. Daily diaries are used effectively to keep parents up-to-date with their child's daily routines contributing towards children's continuity of care.

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

Children are offered a balance of both free-play and adult-initiated activities providing broad learning experiences. The well planned environment promotes children's creative thinking through facilitating imaginary play scenarios. They climb stairs and make dens where they eagerly communicate with each other, describing what they are doing and including others in their play. They appreciate the world around them through hunting for bugs in the school grounds and visiting shops in the village. Access to the outdoor play areas introduces children to play where they explore and discover, for example, a range of carefully arranged drainpipes allow them to watch water flow.

Tactile experiences that include working with bark, sand and gloop help children develop their communication skills as they describe what they see and feel. Children paint images of their own choosing, using paint and making marks as they dig into mud and sand. Challenges are presented to children as they negotiate interesting obstacles that include stairs and ramps, extending their physical skills. During outdoor play they enjoy using wheeled toys, learning how to link together a train and propel themselves on tricycles.

Children learn how to problem solve through finding matching jig saw pieces and constructing three dimensional structures using large and small building materials. The interesting environment and effective use of story book props allows creative presentation of adult-led activities as children sing about the story of 'incy wincy spider'. A range of resources that reflect different cultures and religions help children develop an understanding of the wider community. Sensitive explanations enable children to appreciate the needs of others and encourage their consideration of the others' needs. They take responsibility for their play environment through tidying away their toys at the end of the session. Children have developed sound relationships with their peers. They behave well and respond positively to practitioners who care for them.

Children have ready access to drinks of water and meals are nutritious and served appropriately. Well established routines that include washing hands before meals and cleaning their teeth protect children against illness and infection and promotes their independence. However, the disposal of children's tissues in one of the care rooms is inefficient and compromises their welfare.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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