

Ashington Children's Centre

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

Ashington Children's Centre has been registered since 1995. It is situated in a refurbished school building that is within walking distance of the town of Ashington in Northumberland. Transport systems are regular making the setting easily accessible. The centre also provides, out of school, playgroup and creche provision. All children have access to outdoor play areas.

The centre is registered for 124 places this is made up of 61 places within the nursery, a 24 place Out of school club, a 19 place creche and a 20 place playgroup which is term time only. There are currently 169 children attending of which 117 are in the early years age group. The centre is open 51 weeks per year from 7.30am till 6.30pm Monday to Friday. The Out of school club is open 7.30am to 9.00am and 2.30pm to 6.30pm during school term time and 7.30am to 6.30pm during school holidays. The creche is open during school term times in accordance with demand. Playgroup is open 9.30am to 11.30am on a Monday and Tuesday only and runs in term time. The centre is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are 34 members of staff including managers who work with the children. Each member of staff holds an appropriate childcare qualification ranging from Level 2 to Level 6.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are confident and enthusiastic learners who engage in a wide range of interesting, challenging and exciting activities. The well-established key worker system and effective partnerships with parents ensure that staff know children well and that activities offered are based on children's preferences and needs. There are excellent partnerships with the children centre and other agencies involved with the children and these make a significant contribution to meeting the needs of all children. The strong, purposeful leadership of the manager and the involvement of all staff in robust self-evaluation mean that there is a very good capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- explore further the ways in which parents are able to make their own observational comments and contributions to their child's developmental records.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The safeguarding arrangements for children are exceptional as staff have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities. Thorough recruitment procedures include the robust vetting procedures ensure that all adults working with children are suitable to do so. Extensive risk assessments ensure that any potential risks to children are promptly identified and minimised. Documentation is well maintained and a range of fully inclusive and comprehensive policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and work well in practice. All staff have attended a wealth of relevant training and this is reflected in their good practice and desire for improvement. The free-flow environment thoroughly supports children's learning as much consideration is given to the organisation of all rooms. Equipment and resources are of an excellent quality and are highly suited to children's ages and needs. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have very good support from staff who are very skilled in meeting their needs.

Staff work effectively in partnership with parents to improve outcomes for children. Flexible settling-in procedures provide reassurance for parents and allow children to settle at their own pace. Successful partnership working with other agencies is a particular strength of the setting. Clear channels of communication are well established with the setting actively sharing positive practice. High levels of integrated working are being developed with other relevant professionals, for example, speech and language therapists, to help support children's care.

The leadership and management of the provision is strong. The children benefit from the enthusiastic and committed staff team who strive to identify areas for improvement through the action plan and effective use of self-evaluation. Regular communication between staff and the management team means that good practice and the desire to make the setting the best that they can is encouraged and shared. Reflective practice is ongoing at all levels and recommendations raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed. Parents are invited to express their views, both formally and informally, for example, through questionnaires and daily chats and many parents comment positively on many aspects of the nursery. For example, they comment that they have 'every confidence in the staff and are happy to leave their children in their care' and that 'their children are happy and progressing well'.

Staff are fully involved in assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the setting overall, so helping to ensure a shared understanding of priorities for development. Staff show a high level of commitment and enthusiasm for their work, so helping to create a positive and supportive environment for children and their parents and carers.

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

Children are offered a broad range of activities and experiences to ensure that they make good progress across all areas of learning. Planning is flexible to take account of the needs of the children and is a balance of adult and child-led activities, stemming from children's interests. Assessments of the children's progress by key persons are based on regular observations. These focus on children's achievements within activities and demonstrate the children's good progress in learning, with next steps clearly identified to support further progress. Parents are encouraged to read their children's learning journeys, however, arrangements for them to contribute their own perceptions of their children's progress is not yet fully included. As a result, they miss opportunities for parents to take an even more active part in their children's learning.

All children are warmly welcomed into the setting and are treated with equal regard, which increases their sense of belonging. They are cared for by staff who know them very well, which means their individual needs are successfully met. Children have a good understanding of diversity as they have equal access to a broad selection of toys and resources, such as books, imaginative resources and dressing up clothes, which promote positive images of society.

There is vast range of interesting and inspiring toys and resources which ensure children's small muscle skills develop. For example, there are scissors, stirrers, brushes and natural materials, such as wool, textured paper and card to fold and cut for assembling. Threading, eye coordinating and construction activities mean children are able to learn how to concentrate and finish a task. Counting is threaded through most activities and there are lots of quality resources that help children match, sort and recognise shapes. Children learn early calculating skills as they add and subtract during songs. They problem solve as they try to discover which piece of the jigsaw puzzle is missing and work out that by pressing the button on the pen they are able to make marks. Older children independently access computers and all children are provided with a wealth of resources that encourage them to investigate and explore using all of their senses. For example, babies show great excitement during a painting activity, their faces beaming with delight as they smear paint on the paper. Children are very happy in the setting and have lots of support and attention from the staff, which increases their sense of well-being and security. Activities are stimulating and planned according to children's needs and interests. For example, children listen intently to the 'Book of the month' and decide themselves to create a poster to help inform others of endangered animals. Following on from children's own interest in volcanoes they became curious as to how they could make a volcano themselves. Several experiments took place to create the lava flow resulting in a successful outcome using vinegar and bicarbonate of soda. This exploratory and experimental play enables children's independent and active learning to take place.

The adult attention, support and guidance help children gain a very good understanding of hygiene and they are becoming increasingly independent in their personal care. All staff have achieved first aid certificate and are able to deal

quickly and effectively with any minor injuries. Effective medication and accidents procedures mean children's well-being is protected. Children adopt healthy practices and show that they are developing a secure understanding of how to live a healthy life style. They wash their hands regularly, clean their teeth after meals and enjoy a variety of healthy meals and snacks. Lunch time meals are well balanced, nutritional and take account of the individual and cultural needs of all children. The well-resourced outdoor area provides children with a rich learning environment, with plenty of natural shade, fixed climbing equipment and well-equipped sheltered areas so that it can be used in all weathers. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety. For example, they practise the emergency evacuation regularly and they are taken out to visit local venues which provide opportunities to develop children's awareness of road safety.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
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	1
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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