

# Northumberland Heath Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Inspection date</b>	28/01/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Sarer Tarling
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<b>Type of setting</b>	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*.

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## **Description of the setting**

Northumberland Heath Day Nursery registered in 2010 and is one of a number of settings run by 4Children, a national charity. The nursery is located in Northumberland Heath Children's Centre in Erith, Kent. The nursery is accessible with three base rooms; baby, toddler and pre-school, all of which share access to an enclosed outdoor play area. During school holiday periods, the nursery has the use of the school field and playground. The nursery has a milk kitchen, changing and sleep area for babies and the toddler and pre-school room share use of a bathroom area. Meals are cooked in the nursery kitchen; there is also a staff room and office area.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and operates Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, throughout the year, except for Christmas holiday closures. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 36 children on roll. The nursery follows the Reggio Emilia approach to children's learning and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 staff, with the majority holding appropriate early years qualifications. This number includes a floating member of staff and lunch time assistants. The nursery manager holds a level 6 qualification and has Early Years Professional Status. The nursery provides funded nursery education places for two, three and four-year-olds and receives support and advice from local authority early years professionals.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in this vibrant, inclusive and welcoming nursery because the Early Years Foundation Stage is delivered with exemption. A strong management team and highly effective systems for communicating with parents underpin excellent continuity of care for all children. Each child's individuality is recognised and nurtured by staff, who have a secure knowledge of their specific needs and abilities. The wealth of stimulating activities and experiences help children make outstanding progress in their learning and development. Highly effective monitoring and evaluation systems measure the quality of the provision and enable the nursery to continually improve outcomes for children.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- increasing opportunities for children to use information and communication technology and programmable toys to support their learning

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

The provider has a mission statement which clearly sets out the commitment the organisation has to children and their families. A highly competent manager is employed and the robust recruitment, vetting and induction procedures ensure that children are cared for by qualified, knowledgeable and suitable staff. All staff have regular appraisals to help identify their strengths and areas for improvement and the provider encourages all staff to attend training and to up-grade their qualifications when possible. Staff have an excellent knowledge of how to promote children's welfare and well-being and children's safety is a top priority. The manager ensures that all regulatory paperwork is meticulously maintained including the Criminal Record Bureau checklist. Detailed policies and procedures, which are understood and implemented effectively by all staff, are shared with parents. Designated individuals work well with relevant agencies to protect children. Vulnerable children are protected as all staff are required to complete safeguarding training. As a result they are all confident of the signs to look out for and the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns.

Security systems are excellent. A visual intercom system enables staff in each room to monitor who enters the building. Children are protected as they are well supervised and never left alone with unchecked staff. Accidents are kept to a minimum as comprehensive risk assessments are carried out on the premises daily to ensure hazards are minimised and children are kept safe. Although, in the event of any accidents, children are well cared for as a high ratio of staff have up-to-date first aid knowledge. Staff are aware of the welfare requirements in administering medication, of obtaining written consents from parents and maintaining records. Together with parents and health professionals, staff draw up care plans which ensure children's health needs are met. Children regularly participate in emergency evacuation drills and have a very good understanding of safety within the playrooms. For example, they help to tidy toys away, sweep up sand and wipe up spillages to avoid trips and falls.

Children utilise all areas of the nursery extremely well. They have all year round access to the outside area and, at certain times during the day, they free flow from one room to another exploring what else is on offer. This is when they enjoy meeting up with siblings and friends which also aids a smooth transition from the toddler room into pre-school. Staff display examples children's own work and children have the facility to display some of their work themselves. Well labelled and good quality storage enables all children to independently choose and access their toys. All equipment is age-appropriate, of a high quality and cleaned regularly. The environment feels inclusive as displays; books, toys and wall posters show good positive images of different families, race, culture and disability. Equality and diversity is well promoted as children are supported in learning about the diverse community in which we live. They participate in learning about festivals, other cultures and their customs. Children are encouraged to understand

and develop positive relationships with others who are different from themselves, learning to respect diversity. Parents are fully involved in the cultural aspects of their children's learning; they are encouraged to share their own experiences and bring items from home for children to see. Key workers are supported by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator who works closely with parents and other adults involved in the care of children to draw up individual education plans for those children with special educational needs and /or disabilities. This ensures children receive consistency in their care and as much help and support as possible. Strong links continue to be developed with the children's centre to help promote integrated services for families.

Staff have developed very positive relationships with parents. The required information is recorded and details about children's home life and routines are sought. Therefore, the individual needs of children can be effectively met. An excellent daily exchange of communication ensures both parties caring for children are well informed of each others knowledge of how children have been both at home and in the setting. Parents are constantly encouraged to be involved in their children's learning as they are informed daily about activities their children have undertaken and have unlimited access to observations and assessments of their children's progress. Parents benefit from easy access to information and the policies and procedures and there is clear information provided on how to raise complaints. Parents express great satisfaction with the service they receive. They are very happy with the progress their children are making and appreciate the hard work, dedication and friendliness of all the staff.

Outstanding self-evaluation systems are in place and demonstrate the provider's excellent awareness of the setting's strengths and weaknesses. The nursery has monthly quality assessment visits and quarterly evaluation reviews from advisors and managers from 4Children Ltd. The nursery manager meets regularly with other managers to review procedures, set targets for children's learning and to generally discuss best practice. The management team seek input from the staff, children and parents into the evaluative process so that they can maintain continuous improvements. Areas for improvement are identified in the nursery's comprehensive self assessment form and action plans are drawn up to ensure they are addressed. For example, the nursery wants to enhance the organisation and resources in the outside area and recognises the need to increase information technology resources. Staff are very receptive to new suggestions and keen to implement ideas such as providing more role play opportunities in the outside area. As a result the nursery is outstanding in driving improvement in order to benefit children.

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

The manager and staff team have an excellent understanding of how to effectively deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage welfare, learning and development requirements. Each child has their own 'learning Journey' profile and staff are confident working with the strong systems in place to use observations to plan for

individual children's next steps. Parent's contributions are valued as they are encouraged to share knowledge of their child's learning and development which provides staff with a clear starting point in which to plan an environment which reflects the needs and interests of children.

Frequent incidental observations are recorded against the different areas of learning and these, along with more detailed focused based observations, enable staff to easily identify if a child needs more support or encouragement to access different learning experiences. Using the 'to and fro' books parents can provide written information and photographs of activities and achievements their child has completed at home which is also kept as part of the child's development records. Staff identify learning intentions and incorporate activities to support individual children into the weekly plans. They skilfully differentiate activities to ensure all children can participate and are challenged in their learning but allow them to develop at their own pace. Parents have regular opportunities to review their child's progress with the key worker and to contribute to the curriculum. This means that children are able to make outstanding progress towards the Early Learning Goals as assessed from their starting points.

Children have a strong sense of security and belonging. Gradual settling-in procedures enable parents to share information with staff about babies and young children's home routines. This helps ensure consistency as staff are aware of preferred feeding and sleeping patterns and any comforters to help children feel secure. As a result, most children separate from their parents positively, and those who find it difficult, soon settle with the caring support of staff. In the baby room photographs of family members are displayed to offer comfort and distraction if they do become upset. Babies receive individual care from their key worker but get to know other staff well. Staff cuddle babies and create a generally cosy ambience for them to sleep in their cots with fresh clean bedding. Throughout the nursery sleeping children are closely monitored to ensure their comfort and safety.

Through their body language babies and toddlers show they are secure as they happily set off to explore their surroundings. Light and sound push button toys stimulate the senses. Babies who are mobile eagerly explore the natural and tactile objects in the treasure basket. Low easels enable babies to reach paint pots although on occasion paper is laid on the floor and, with babies stripped down to their nappies, they can touch and move around in the paint! Water and glitter is added to sand to change its texture and bubbles and colouring are added to warm water for children to splash and play in. Young children develop their hand-eye coordination as they hammer pegs in holes, stack cups and work out which shape fits through the hole in the shape sorter.

Children have many opportunities throughout each day to make a positive contribution. There is much laughter and excellent interaction to be heard and seen. Children play co-operatively together, learning to share resources and take turns during games. Staff report that there is very little need to use their behaviour management strategies with the children as they are usually so busy and engrossed in activities that there is very little cause for disagreements. Children develop respectful attitudes towards others as they use their good manners of 'please' and 'thank-you'. They are able to share interesting news and talk about

what they would like to do during circle time, providing them with skills for the future as they relate and negotiate with others. Throughout the daily routine staff remind children of the activities on offer and the sequence of events. A pictorial time line supports children who are still settling, and those with English as an Additional Language, to understand what is coming next. Children approach staff for comfort and assistance as they need it and staff are adept at anticipating the children's reactions and needs too. Pre-school children can express how they are feeling by hanging images of how they feel onto the twigs of the 'feelings tree'.

Children develop skills for the future as they have a strong curiosity and exploratory impulse which sets the pattern for enthusiastic learning. Knowledge and understanding of the world around is developed in many ways such as shared use of the children's centre eco garden. Here children can observe local wildlife, use magnifying glasses on bug hunts and learn about sustainability as they dig and plant flowers and vegetables. A well thought out exploration and investigation zone enables children to observe closely and handle natural objects such as shells, stones, brushes and sponges. However, there are some gaps in resources and planning for children to obtain skills in information and communication technology. Children are supported in learning about the diverse community in which we live as they find out more about different celebrations and festivals and have access to good quality books and resources which depict positive images of different cultures and disability.

Book areas in the younger rooms are inviting with cushions and long comfy baskets where children lay looking through a wide variety of fact, fiction and dual language books with friends or by themselves. They really enjoy favourite stories read by staff at the nursery, and those on the visiting story bus, as they engage children and encourage them to join in. The pre-school book area is much more grown up, with comfy chairs and resources such as maps which they use to plan places to visit and imaginary holidays with staff. Children explore mark making and are developing their early writing skills. Many children are able to write their own names or at least recognise individual letters and the sounds they make. They enjoy using notepads to write lists and use post cards to draw pictures and write messages home. Their command of language is excellent because staff hold meaningful conversations with them to broaden their vocabulary. Children's speech and language skills are also monitored through the ECAT (every child a talker) key person at the nursery.

Children are developing a good sense of rhythm through the use of musical instruments and dance. Children use their imaginations as the role-play areas indoors and outside keep them avidly engaged for extended periods. Creative play is very popular and, alongside the organised art and craft activities such as toothbrush and spin painting, the children can independently access a wide range of medium and recycled materials. Children recognise primary colours and during painting activities learn how to mix and create different colours. Children's problem solving skills are developing well as they work out how to reverse the bikes into the parking spaces. Staff encourage children to discuss and predict which objects they think will float or sink in the water. Before long, several children are gathering other items from around the room and challenging their friends to guess. Children join in with action songs involving the addition and subtraction of



numbers and explore volume and quantities when playing in the water and sand. This results in children, who are confident when counting and using mathematical terms such as; higher, heavier, fuller, longer, less than or more than.

Children's health is extremely well promoted. Robust hygiene practices are applied consistently. For example, staff wear gloves and aprons when changing nappies and use colour coded cloths to prevent cross contamination when cleaning the nursery. A record is maintained of the checks to the bathroom area to ensure cleanliness. Children are proficient in taking themselves to the toilet and the spread of infection is minimised as picture prompts remind children how to wash their hands thoroughly. Children learn about the importance of cleaning their teeth and eating healthily from the visiting dental hygienist. In the event of a child becoming unwell parents are contacted, children are made comfortable and closely monitored and emergency medical assistance sought if necessary. Children who have an infectious illness are excluded to prevent cross infection.

Children are developing an understanding of healthy lifestyles. Individual dietary needs and religious backgrounds are taken into consideration when planning what children eat. Children develop their independence as they pour their own drinking water throughout the session, recognising when they are thirsty. They look forward to the healthy snacks and meals which are freshly prepared. Babies and toddlers develop coordination as they begin to feed themselves. Older children are making healthy choices as they serve themselves from the good range available, tucking in enthusiastically and often going back for seconds. Meal times are a social occasion as staff sit with the children who are beginning to competently use cutlery. Children benefit from being physically active. Equipment in the baby room supports them as they learn to sit, encourages them to crawl and helps them to pull to standing. Toddlers enjoy scooting around on the sit and ride toys. Older children enjoy playing musical chairs and enthusiastically play outside all year as suitable clothing is provided in order that they can explore in all weather conditions. Balance and coordination skills are developing as children use stepping stones, spin hoops, run around, jump and skip and learn to throw and catch balls with precision. During school holidays the nursery makes good use of the school playground, the field and trim trail agility course. Overall outcomes for children are outstanding.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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