

Darlington College Childcare Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Donna Lancaster
Setting address	Central Park, Haughton Road, Darlington, County Durham, DL1 1DR
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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

The Darlington College Childcare Centre was re-registered in August 2006. The original nursery was established in the mid eighties and was situated in the old college grounds. The Centre is owned by Darlington College and the Principal/Chief Executive and the Corporation Board have overall responsibility for the provision. It is situated within the college grounds, which is close to Darlington town centre. The Centre is purpose built with sole use and is fully accessible. There are five separate rooms for each age group with access to garden play areas. A maximum of 89 children aged under eight years may attend the nursery at any one time, of these, not more than 39 may be under 3 years at any one time. There are currently 105 children on roll, of these, 54 are early years children. The Centre is open Monday to Friday 8.00 am until 5.30pm and closes between Christmas and New Year, all public bank holidays and for one day each April for an annual training event.

The centre provides childcare for staff and students of the College and for community users. The centre is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and the voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The centre employs 22 staff, of these, 20 staff work directly with the children, and of these, including the manager hold appropriate qualifications in childcare and education. One staff member holds a BA honours degree in Childhood and Youth studies, two staff member holds a BA honours degree in Early Childhood Studies and two staff members hold the Early Years Sector Endorsed Foundation Degree. The centre employs a qualified cook who provides freshly prepared meals and snacks which are cooked on site. An administrative assistant is also employed to work at the centre. The centre has achieved the Darlington Pathways to Quality Scheme in December 2008. The centre have established partnerships with Darlington Sure Start Partnership, Darlington College and the Early Excellence Centre in Huddersfield to provide work based training and vocational work experience for young people.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The Darlington College Childcare Centre provides an excellent range of effective learning experiences and play opportunities based on children's individual interests. Consequently, children make exceptional progress in all areas of their learning and development. Children are effectively supported by well qualified and experienced staff members who recognise children's individual uniqueness and provide an inclusive, stimulating and interesting, well organised, safe and secure learning environment. Children benefit immensely through the excellent partnership established with parents and outside agencies that help support children's development and progress. Continuous improvement and a clear vision of future development is a key strength of this already outstanding provision. Systems to monitor and evaluate the setting's performance are highly efficient and

demonstrate the staff's excellent commitment to improving their service to children and to maintaining improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- developing the systems for tracking all children's progress by including the younger children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is very effectively safeguarded because staff have an exceptionally high understanding of how to report concerns and initiate the appropriate proceedings both within the organisation and in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All record keeping documents, policies and procedures are meticulously maintained and the robust recruitment, induction and appraisal systems are in place to ensure the staff ongoing suitability. The indoor and outdoor environments are subjected to thorough and rigorous risk assessments that ensure any potential hazards to children are minimised. Robust systems to audit the causes of accidents ensure that children's safety is further promoted. Staff provide an inclusive and welcoming environment by organising the learning environment to ensure activities are accessible to all children and are clearly labelled by using text or pictures. The manager and staff have worked very well together to create an exciting, colourful and challenging environment where children eagerly join in with activities and enjoy their time whilst at the nursery. Children's art work and photographs adorn the environment, which gives children a real sense of belonging. Managers and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and a highly inclusive provision. Excellent systems are in place to identify and support any children with special educational needs or English as an additional language. Staff have attended training and implemented a range of ways to support children's learning, for example, staff and most of the children use Sign Support English to communicate with each other. Staff work closely with a range of experts and outside agencies to ensure all children are able to develop to their full potential.

The extremely effective key worker system enables staff to establish very close working relationship with parents from the onset, in order to secure continuity of children's care. The management works very closely with staff, a parent's forum group and uses questionnaires with all parents to carefully monitor the provision and set in place very clear action plans which are successfully used to secure improvements in the provision for the children. The management radiate a passion to provide the best possible care for children. Consequently, the staff team are committed, enthusiastic and innovative in creating a positive and enabling play and learning environment.

Partnerships with parents, partners and other agencies are exemplary in all

aspects. The two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between all partners is integral to children's learning, development and welfare. For example, support from bi-lingual teachers and inclusion support officers uses all partners knowledge, experience and skills to plan an individual learning experience for all children. Staff encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning through regular newsletters, help with topics and ask them what interests your child, home diaries for weekend events, and adding comments on the daily sheets. Parents welcome the opportunity to meet with staff at parents evening where they look at their child's progress records recorded on individual memory sticks. Parents and carers are extremely complimentary about the operation of the nursery, expressing a high regard for the staff and the welcoming and secure environment and flexible service provided.

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

Staff are very enthusiastic and have a very good understanding of the EYFS which means highly effective systems are in place to ensure children's learning is an individual journey, this is achieved as parents and staff contribute to finding out children's starting points and building on these. Translation support is available for parents with English as an additional language to ensure they are fully informed of their child's progress, and to ensure staff fully understand parents' requests and the needs of all children. Children have an individual digital Learning Journey which contains evidence of how the child is progressing and identifies their next steps. These are detailed and are used effectively to inform future planning so that no child is ever disadvantaged. This results in every child attending making excellent progress according to their starting points and capabilities during their time at the nursery. Effective systems are in place in order to track older children's progress. However, as yet the system to track younger children's progress is not fully developed. Staff clearly put the children's interests first and willingly try new initiatives to help them develop, for example, by implementing a visual timetable. Staff take photos which are displayed in the digital picture frame for parents to view when collecting the children.

Babies and toddlers enjoy numerous sensory experiences, such as playing with treasure baskets, coloured bottles and textured materials. They enjoy craft activities and discover a sense of self as they look at themselves in the large mirrors. They develop walking skills as they pull themselves to standing position and walk around the room holding onto the furniture. Children communication, language and literacy skills are developing exceptionally well as they thoroughly enjoy reading books, looking at the pictures, listening and making stories up. This is further enhanced as the children are all involved in group activities such as visits from the zoo lab and trips to the Eco- farm. Children hold, touch and talk about the animals and the vegetables that they see. Areas such as small world and role play help children to develop an understanding of the world around them using their imagination and creativity. Additionally, children learn about other cultures and backgrounds and celebrate various festivals through discussions, art work, cooking and displays around the centre. Children are given excellent opportunities to develop their early writing skills, for example, core provision in the rooms for

older children have clipboards and mark making implements. Pencils, paints, crayons and different media allows for younger children to develop early mark making skills. Children have extremely good opportunities to explore, experiment, investigate and problem solve. For example, information technology is readily available at all times in the rooms for older children. Such as computers, a smart board, remote controlled cars, voice recorders, walkie talkies, video recorder, listening stations, and toys with gadgets, musical books, and magnifying glasses. Younger children in the centre also have access to toys and equipment which develops their skills for the future, for example, telephones, toy computers and interactive books.

Children have the freedom to explore and make choices in what they wish to do from a wealth of interesting activities and resources. All children have direct access to the outdoor play areas which are extremely well resources and very effectively used to enhance children's learning in a different environment. Children have grown plants and vegetables. They harvest their produce, wash and take it to the cook to have for their lunch. This helps children to have a positive attitude to healthy eating and promotes their awareness of food and where it comes from. Daily routines provide excellent learning opportunities for children of all ages. For example, the older and more able children develop independence through a cafe style snack, they find their names and learn the importance of good hygiene practices. The children are very well behaved. They learn manners and follow the role model set by staff who have high expectations of children's behaviour. Children learn to be considerate of others, helpful and kind and learn to share from an early age. Children are learning to keep themselves safe as staff talk about road safety and they practice an emergency evacuation of the building frequently. In addition, they learn more about safety as they participate in activities and topics such as people who help us.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met