

Higher Croft Children's Centre

Fishmoor Drive, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 3UY

Inspection date	20/08/2013
Previous inspection date	16/05/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Children are highly motivated and consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. The educational programmes have depth and breadth and are delivered by staff, who have very high expectations of themselves and children.
- Key persons are highly skilled and sensitive and help children to form secure emotional attachments and feel very secure within the setting.
- Children have access to an extremely stimulating playgroup, both indoors and outside, which effectively supports them and promotes their learning.
- Staff have an excellent understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The rigorous implementation of robust policies and procedures successfully promotes children's safety and well-being.
- Partnerships with parents, external agencies and other providers are very effective and contribute to ensuring children's needs are quickly identified and met highly effectively.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main playroom indoors and in the outside area.
- The inspector held meetings with the early years managers and the operational managers and carried out a joint observation with the early years manager.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of practitioners working within the setting, the provider's self-evaluation form and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to at the inspection and from their written feedback to the centre.

Inspector

Wendy Fitton

Full Report

Information about the setting

Higher Croft Children's Centre was registered in 2004. The centre is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is one of 13 children's centres registered with the local authority. The childcare provision is integrated within the children's centre and managed by a local management board. The centre is currently undergoing an early years review and re-organisation. This will result in a down size to the service and changes to the childcare provision. The childcare provision is located in a purpose-built children's centre situated in the Blackburn area of Lancashire. Children have access to base rooms and enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 61 children on roll and all children are within the early age range. The centre provides funded early years education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. There are strategies in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children, who have English as an additional language.

The centre employs 11 members of childcare staff, including the manager. All members of staff hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications at level 3 and above. The centre is supported by the local authority and an early years teacher.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- develop ways of providing further creative opportunities for children within the outdoor area to enhance the already first class practice, such as by using permanent resources, for example, a digging area, a sand pit, a natural area and exploratory area to support children's knowledge of the outdoor world around them.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children thrive and are well motivated to learn in this extremely high quality centre. Staff have excellent skills and knowledge of the learning and development requirements and a superb understanding of how children learn. The exciting, stimulating and extremely well organised environment ensures that all children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals. Children consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. There is an extremely sharp focus on helping children to acquire communication and language skills and supporting physical, personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children are exceptionally well prepared for school and their next stage of learning.

Children feel extremely secure and comfortable with routines and the superb close relationship with their key person. They respond to appropriate boundaries with dynamic encouragement and support. Children fully engage in their activities and experience rich, varied and imaginative learning opportunities. They rapidly develop and progress towards the early learning goals.

Children develop excellent personal and social skills. They develop their confidence and self-awareness as they participate in circle time, group time and enjoy the positive social occasion at lunch time with their friends and adults. Children have positive relationships and demonstrate friendly behaviour as they initiate conversations and form good relationships with peers and familiar adults. They are confident and self-aware and enjoy carrying out small tasks. Staff encourage children to explore the environment and talk about what they are learning and value their ideas. They provide regular time and space for children to enjoy energetic play in the outdoor area to support their physical skills. Staff give children clear instructions and help them to deal with more than one action when tidying away toys, preparing the table for their lunches and tending to their own personal needs at the bathroom.

Staff support children's communication and language skills very well. They prompt children to think and discuss and talk to the children about what they have been doing. Children enjoy shared experiences that they can reflect on with staff, for example, when they pretend to have a picnic and use role play props to ignite their imaginations. They develop their literacy skills through an environment that is rich in signs, symbols, notices, numbers, words and pictures. They recognise their own names for self-registration and their own place mats at the table for lunch. Staff discuss with children about the characters in the stories and use a range of puppets, visual cues and props to promote early literacy skills. Children use some number names and number language spontaneously when they climb the steps on the obstacle course and when counting animals and objects in the number book. They recite numbers in order up to 10 and group and sort different animals into patterns and sequences. As a result, they develop their concepts of mathematics. Children develop their knowledge of the world as staff arouse their awareness of the features of the environment during outdoor play. They comment on features they have observed and found in the grass and show concern for living things in the environment. There is scope to consider even more creative ideas for the outdoor area, so that children can further explore and investigate the natural world and access the continuous provision.

Teaching is extremely effective and assessment procedures are rigorous, meticulous and highly comprehensive. Staff are dynamic and enthusiastically plan the learning programme, utilising the information gathered from parents on entry to the setting. Each child is assigned a key person to be responsible for their development, routine care practices and liaison with parents. Every child has an individual profile and a record of learning that is first class. Staff have a wealth of knowledge of every child's needs and future needs. All children are making very rapid progress towards the early learning goals, given their age and starting points. Staff are highly skilled and have an excellent understanding of how children learn. They are exceptional in supporting children's progress. Relationships with parents are exemplary and make a highly innovative contribution to meeting all children's needs. Parents chat on a daily basis either before or after a session. They contribute to learning records and staff clearly plan activities

according to children's interests. Parents engage in activity days, sports days and contribute to the evaluation of the organisation of their children's development and learning needs. As a result, excellent relationships are actively contributing to children's learning and progression.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The key person system is highly effective and well embedded, which helps children form secure, emotional attachments and provides a strong base for their personal, social and emotional development. Children select resources independently and learn to plan and initiate their own learning as they explore the high-quality resources and activities provided. As a result, children learn the dispositions, attitudes and skills they need for future learning. Children are well settled in the centre because staff have an excellent understanding of their needs through 'All about me' information provided by parents on entry to the setting. They confidently seek reassurance and support from staff if they need help or comfort.

Staff consistently give the highest priority to the safety of children and effectively support them to develop their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They encourage the children to take appropriate risks in a well-organised and supervised environment. Children display high levels of confidence with day-to-day routines and understand the procedures in place to ensure they are kept safe. They learn to behave appropriately and staff are enthusiastic role models who help and support them to understand what acceptable behaviour is. Children are actively encouraged to take part in small and large group activities to help build relationships between one another and to encourage friendships. They respect each other and become sensitive to diverse needs. Children learn to respect and care for one another, taking into consideration their thoughts, ideas, feelings, likes and dislikes. This practice supports children in managing their own feelings and behaviour towards others. Staff consistently praise and encourage good behaviour and recognise children's achievements by displaying their own work and photographs around the playrooms. This supports children to feel really good about themselves and feel welcome and secure. Children's interest is ignited through the inspirational activities and experiences that are planned to cover the prime areas of learning to support children's physical, personal, social and emotional development with a sharp focus on communication and language skills.

Children demonstrate through routines that they have an excellent understanding of the importance of regular exercise, a healthy diet and attending to their own personal needs. Physical exercise is positively promoted on a daily basis and includes fresh air, climbing, balancing and exercising on wheeled toys. The centre has implemented a healthy, well-balanced and nutritious menu and have the 'Smile for Life' accreditation status. Older children make healthy choices about what they eat and drink and are encouraged to serve themselves at mealtimes. All children are encouraged to help themselves to drinking water in all areas. The centre cook and all staff have excellent knowledge and understanding of how to meet individual dietary needs.

Quality teaching highly motivates the children. They are making very rapid progress to

acquire the skills and capacity to be well prepared for their next stages in their learning and their transition to the next age group or to school. There is a comprehensive focus on the prime areas of learning and a very sharp focus on self-help skills and independence through choices. Parents are extremely happy and comment very positively about the care their children receive. They talk about the key features they recommend to other parents. For example, they are very happy with the care provided, that staff are friendly, warm and welcoming and that children are developing really well. Parents are fully aware of how their children are learning and progressing. They are kept up to date with all information through the communication diary, the learning records and the wealth of information displayed around the noticeboards. As a result of exceptional relationships, children's needs are given the utmost priority and they experience smooth transitions in their learning.

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

Leadership is inspirational and self-evaluation is well documented and highlights the strong emphasis on maintaining high levels of achievement for all children. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified and focused improvement plans are in place to secure continuous improvement. The process for self-evaluation within the centre incorporates the views of staff, children and parents. The staff team share a vision to provide an excellent service for the children and their families, thus, making a positive difference to their lives. They are highly motivated in their continuous professional development and are continually seeking ways to improve. Effective systems are implemented to enable staff to continually evaluate their practice through various quality award programme and parent surveys. This is achieved through, high quality systems for professional supervisions, peer observations, staff's self-appraisals and discussions during meetings with leaders, managers and the early years teacher. The system of evaluation of staff performance through peer observation is robust and fully encourages staff's continued professional development, in order to learn through honest and critical reflection.

All staff prioritise children's safety and have an excellent awareness of safeguarding issues. They are competent in the procedures to follow and who to contact in the event of any concerns about children or colleagues. Staff are fully aware of the centre's designated child protection managers and the process to follow if they are concerned about any issues within their base rooms. Managers continue to monitor staff performance within the playrooms and ensure that staff are deployed effectively according to qualifications and experience with specific age groups of children. An extensive range of policies and procedures successfully underpin daily practice and regular reviews are carried out. Extensive risk assessments for all areas of the building, the outdoor area and resources ensure children's safety remains paramount. Robust recruitment and vetting systems ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so. Extensive support and liaison with a wide range of professionals has enabled staff to implement the Early Years Foundation Stage with confidence. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of the requirements to effectively monitor all children's skills, abilities and progress. Interventions are sought at the early stages to identify any group falling behind their peers or below their expected achievements, which results in children's needs being met effectively and

relevant support services involved.

Highly effective partnerships between parents, external agencies and other providers are evident and well established. These contribute to meeting children's individual needs effectively. There are excellent relationships with other providers and professionals. The centre works closely with other agencies to provide best outcomes for children. These include family support, local schools, health professionals and inclusion support teams. All agencies follow agreed working protocols. Staff have excellent relationships with parents. Effective communication systems ensure that parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress. Photographs and informative displays cover the walls. These illustrate the breadth of activities that children are actively involved in during their time at the nursery, accompanied by explanations relating to how they learn. Parents contribute extensively to the initial assessment of their children's starting points on entry. They are also provided with a variety of opportunities to support and share information about their children's learning and development at home. Children are extremely well prepared for their next stage in learning and well prepared for their transition to school. Targeted learning programmes and children's development is shared with other providers. As a result, there is consistent, secure support for children with any special educational needs and/or disabilities and therefore, no child is disadvantaged.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY268694
Local authority	Blackburn
Inspection number	915669
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	61
Name of provider	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Date of previous inspection	16/05/2011
Telephone number	01254 267920

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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