

Oaktrees a centre for children and their families

1 Alnwick Avenue, NORTH SHIELDS, Tyne and Wear, NE29 7AX

Inspection date	26/09/2013
Previous inspection date	05/10/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
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		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Singing and story times are exceptionally well planned. This ensures that children's language development, speaking skills and confidence are extremely well supported.
- Partnerships with parents is impeccable. Staff work with them extremely well to ensure that they are fully involved in their children's care, learning and development. Consequently, children settle in quickly, their individual needs are identified and parents are effectively involved in planning, which supports their child's well-being and progress.
- Staff involve relevant internal and external professionals fully. This ensures that all children receive the targeted and individual support they need to enable them to reach their full potential.
- Leaders and staff have a sharp focus on what they need to provide and why, so that the high-quality provision continues to improve the life chances of children. Therefore, children are safe, confident, happy individuals who develop and achieve extremely well.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Fewer opportunities are available in the environment for more able children to access different writing and drawing materials freely, to further promote their choices and enjoyment.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector held a meeting with the leaders, early years teacher, nominated person and speech and language therapist.
- The inspector interacted with children and spoke with parents.
- The inspector observed activities and routines in the playrooms and the outdoor areas.
- The inspector looked at a sample of documentation including children's 'learning journals,' planning, the self-evaluation form and some policies.

Inspector

Shirley Peart

Full Report

Information about the setting

Oaktrees a centre for children and their families, was originally registered in 1999 as Childcare Norham. It is on the Early Years Register and is situated in a residential area in North Shields, North Tyneside and is managed by the local authority. The centre serves the local area and is accessible to children aged from two to three years of age. It operates from two main rooms, there are three outdoor enclosed areas available for outdoor play and two family rooms.

The centre employs 13 members of childcare staff, which includes three 'early life' team leaders. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. One team leader holds Early Years Professional Status. The centre has input from a speech and language therapist and a qualified early years teacher. The nursery opens Monday to Friday for 52 weeks of the year, excluding bank holidays. Sessions are during term-time from 8.45am until 11.45am and from 12.30pm until 3.30pm. Children attend either a morning or afternoon session. There are currently 65 children attending who are within the early years age group. The centre provides funded early education for two-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review the environment and provision, especially around ensuring that older, more able children can access different writing tools when they wish.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff plan for children's play and learning experiences based on their interests and individual needs exceptionally well. Adult-led, small group or large group activities, have a sharp focus on the prime areas of learning and sensory activities. Because these experiences, such as, water play or exploring real vegetables, are new to many of the children, the staff have an excellent understanding of what they plan and why. Staff also confidently explain why they sing the same songs and tell children the same stories for a few weeks. They know that this helps children with their levels of concentration and language skills, due to the repetitive nature and stages of development of the children. Because of this, staff notice a rapid improvement in children's ability to sit down, join in with singing and listen attentively to familiar stories since starting in the group. Parents

are encouraged to borrow the current story books that children are listening to and parents take home song sheets so that they can practise the same songs at home with their children. This promotes parents involvement extremely well and provides excellent consistency and continuity for children's learning.

Children's 'learning journals' are easily accessible to parents. They can choose to look at these whenever they like and often sit in the centre's family room at leisure to look through them. Staff also find time to go over these periodically with parents. Pages within the 'learning journals' show lots of positive progress under the, 'Look what I can do' section, which display lots of lovely photographs and captions regarding children's achievements. Staff understand the importance of giving parents some positive feedback daily, so that their self-esteem and confidence in the knowledge that their children are thriving is celebrated. As well as the completion of the progress check at age two, every child has a six week review with their key person and parent either in the centre or in their home. This ensures that children's learning and development is closely monitored and the next steps are planned for, which ensures that children make rapid progress.

All children join in enthusiastically with singing and story time. They excitedly go outside to sit on cushions in the large covered canopy when staff talk about this, which shows that young children are beginning to follow routines very well. Children choose a musical instrument and the excellent teaching means that children use these correctly and in time to fast and slow beats and can stop on instructions. Staff use story and song bags effectively. As they get objects, toys and puppets out they ask children if they can remember the songs that represent them. Therefore, when staff pull out a toy car, children enthusiastically shout, 'driving in my car.' This promotes children's language for thinking very well. All children then join in competently with singing and actions and can remember most of the songs they have been learning. This demonstrates that they are making excellent progress in their social, communication and language development and sustain their interest extremely well.

Children play with scented water during planned activities. They love to explore this with cups and scoops and have a great time. Staff plan this extremely well so that children use the water in the way they choose. They put down lots of towels so that children make a mess and do not slip. Therefore, children splash vigorously and some pour it over their heads repeating actions over and over again. This promotes children's exploratory play and sensory development exceptionally well. Staff are aware that children need to go through certain stages and schemas before they can move on. For example, once children have experienced free water play, such as this, they will gradually introduce more equipment such as, funnels and sieves, to aid children's concentration and understanding of volume. This ensures that children are extremely well prepared for the move to nursery when they are three-years-old.

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

The majority of children have not been attending long. However they are highly confident and very settled. They enter the centre happily waving at staff saying; 'Hiya,' and they leave their parents easily and without fuss. This shows that staff are highly skilled in

helping children to form strong emotional attachments from the start, which provides children with a secure and safe base to support their growing independence. The environment is purposefully set up to meet the needs of two-year-olds. There are designated spaces with regular and familiar resources and 'dens' made of good quality wooden furniture and voiles, where children can take themselves off with toys or books. Areas are spacious and well designed so that children move about freely and safely. This also means that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are safe. For example, they use low-level sturdy equipment, such as, the wooden slide and steps confidently with the help of their key person. Resources are plentiful but staff ensure that they do not overwhelm children by allowing too much equipment out at once. However, there is scope to continue to review the environment and provision, especially around ensuring that older, more able children can access different writing tools when they wish. Toys are stored in low-level baskets with labelling and pictures and some have 'stop' signs so that children know that those things may not be available. Staff are aware of the advantages of this as they state it helps children to learn to control what they want, sustain their play and are less likely to tip everything out at once.

Children have plenty of good opportunities for outdoor play. They access the indoor and outdoor space as they wish and resources are flexible so that children can use them indoors or out, such as, real pans and musical instruments. The three different outdoor areas provide lots of excellent challenges to support children's growing physical skills and exploratory impulse. For example, the 'willow' garden provides a natural space so that children explore, climb and balance on beams and crates and swing on tree seats. Snack time is a very good focused time for staff to help children with their independence. They sit in their small key groups and staff show children the fruit in its natural form before cutting it up. At this time they encourage children's decision making, choices, turn taking and introduce simple number concepts. Therefore, children successfully say that they would like some banana or apple as they chose one piece at a time. They successfully learn to wait for their friends to have theirs before it is their turn again. Children are also developing very good self-care skills and some are beginning to recognise when they need the bathroom. They wash their hands independently, use paper towels and know that they have to put these in the bin afterwards.

Children's behaviour is good and staff manage this extremely well. They regularly give children the 'thumbs up' when they have done something good and they are quick to help solve any conflicts that may arise. This helps children to learn right from wrong and what is acceptable. Children have strong bonds with staff and their key persons. Staff also build up relationships with parents quickly, which helps children to cope extremely well with the transition into a new environment. The key persons complete an 'all about me and my family' document, which gives staff a very good understanding of children's routines, preferences and starting points.

All families receive a home visit from their key person prior to starting in the group. This helps staff to gain a good insight into the families' needs and how best to support them as a whole. The key person system and environment is constantly reviewed to ensure that this continually meets children's individual needs. For example, when a key person felt that a child would manage better in a different room due to the easy access of the natural garden environment, this was discussed fully with the parents to agree the change. If

there are any changes such as this, existing and new key persons discuss children's needs together and form a plan alongside the parents. Consequently, children are extremely well supported so that their personal, social, emotional and physical needs are exceptionally well met.

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

This inspection took place following a notification to Ofsted from the provider, regarding an incident when a child left the premises unsupervised for a short period of time. This was partly due to human error at the time, regarding staff not being sufficiently vigilant, congestion at collection time and a gate not being secure. The inspection found that the management team took swift action and carried out a full investigation into the incident and made immediate changes to their procedures, risk assessments and routines. For example, signage is in place to remind parents and visitors to close the main gate and an additional high handle is now fitted to it. Staff also altered their room layout and collection procedure to prevent congestion at doors. A team leader now monitors the main entrance/exit door to the building and staff within the rooms open and close their door to allow parents to enter and leave with their children. These tightened procedures ensure that safety practices, around collection and drop off times, are highly robust to prevent any further incidents and ensure that no child can leave unattended. Overall, children are very safe and secure in the centre. There are many outstanding features in the nursery; however, this incident, caused by a lapse in practice, has had an impact on the judgement.

Arrangements for safeguarding children are good. Staff have a clear understanding of what they would do if they have concerns about a child's care or welfare. They adhere to procedures for mobile phone and camera use and useful notices are displayed for parents and staff regarding safeguarding and child protection. Flow charts of what to do if they are worried about a child, are prominently displayed as reminders.

All staff are employed by the local authority and clear and robust recruitment and selection procedures are in place. No-one can begin working with children unless they are fully vetted, cleared and deemed suitable. The centre recently changed the way they operate and now only provide care and education specifically for children aged between two and three years. Staff within the authority were re-interviewed following robust criteria and specifically chosen for their roles. Each staff member has an 'individual performance review' carried out periodically and supervision is ongoing. The leaders are developing this further by observing staff practice and using video recordings, to help them reflect on practice and for leaders to identify any support needed.

The focus of the centre is part of the wider local authority agenda regarding closing gaps in children's learning and working closely with parents, so that their children are well prepared for school. Professionals who have a regular input into the centre, such as, the early years speech and language therapist and the early years teacher, support the staff extremely well to ensure that the activities they provide have a positive impact on children's learning and development. The early years teacher and team leaders also

ensure that there is a clear overview of where each child is at. This means that staff provide effective teaching strategies and are well aware of what to do to help children make progress and to prevent them from falling behind. For example, 'daily team reflection' meetings at the end of each day, ensures that staff discuss all aspects of children's individual needs and progress. Staff are also highly pro-active in seeking the help of external professionals, such as, advice from a dietician or health visitor. Consequently, they quickly target support for children's individual care and development where it is needed. These preventive measures and high staff input, demonstrate a strong drive to improve and support children's well-being and achievement overall.

Self-evaluation is robust and identifies clear targets for improvement. Although the centre already provides high quality child care, leaders are not complacent. They have a clear vision and plans to further develop the environment; for example, the allotment, the conservatory and patio area to benefit the children's care and learning and parental involvement further. They have addressed the recommendations from the last inspection, as systems for promoting children's learning and development and tracking their progress is robust. Although none of the children attend other early years settings there are secure procedures in place for exchanging information should this arise.

Staff form excellent links with parents and plan fun activities for the whole family during school holidays, such as, art, craft, outings, sand and water play. This helps parents understand the value of play and the importance of staying healthy. They are also planning to provide training opportunities for parents and engage them in coffee mornings. Home visits are helping staff to have a clear overview of individual children's needs so that they can target support where it is needed. This also means that staff have a good understanding of what they may need to do to help make a difference in children's learning. Children can only remain in the centre until their third birthday. After this, once parents decide where their children will go next, they are very well supported by staff. Key persons are flexible and helpful as they often visit the child's next placement with parents and children if required. They have close contact with surrounding schools and nurseries and they pass on relevant information about children's progress, which supports children exceptionally well with their transition. Parents are very pleased with the centre. Verbal and written comments include; 'It's absolutely great, I'm dead impressed, my child loves it they come in so well and they're thriving.' Parents also particularly like the way that they can meet other parents in the accessible family room and have a coffee. They also state 'The atmosphere is great, the staff don't just concentrate on the child they think about the whole family, even the managers are lovely, they all want the parents and children to be happy and feel comfortable.'

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	310200
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	937029
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	64
Number of children on roll	64
Name of provider	North Tyneside Council
Date of previous inspection	05/10/2009
Telephone number	0191 200 6210

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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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