

Ashington Minors

Back Sycamore Street, ASHINGTON, Northumberland, NE63 0AH

Inspection date

04/12/2013

Previous inspection date

03/10/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	3
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	3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Children benefit from a varied range of indoor activities and experiences and are sufficiently supported by the staff members, which helps to make steady progress in their learning and development.
- Children build secure attachments with the members of staff. As a result, they smile and show obvious delight and pleasure when they spend time with them.
- Members of staff use a calm, positive approach to managing children's behaviour, which takes into account children's understanding and maturity. Consequently, children's behaviour is good.

It is not yet good because

- Self-evaluation lacks rigour, is not fully embedded and does not include the views of parents and children. Therefore, strengths and areas for development are not clearly identified and actions for improvement are not precisely targeted.
- The outdoor area is bland and unattractive for young children, it does not fully engage their interest and give them sufficient opportunities to explore the natural world.
- Partnerships with parents are not fully developed in order to ensure that important information about children's learning and development is shared and used, to further enhance children's progress and development.

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 four playrooms and the outside learning environment. The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager and held meetings with the manager of the provision.
- The inspector looked at a range of children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children, the provider's self-evaluation form.

Inspector

Anthea Errington

Full report

Information about the setting

Ashington Minors opened in 2007 and is privately owned. It operates from purpose built premises in the town of Ashington, Northumberland. The nursery serves the immediate locality and also the surrounding areas. The nursery opens five days a week from 7.30am until 6.30pm all year round, except on bank holidays and for a week at Christmas. Children attend for a variety of sessions and have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 89 children in the early years age range. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-year-old children.

There are currently 15 staff working directly with the children, most of whom have an appropriate early years qualification. Twelve of the staff have qualifications at level 3 and above. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- improve partnership working to encourage all parents to contribute information about what children do at home and use this shared knowledge to plan together and think through ideas of how to move children forward in their learning.

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

- further develop and implement a thorough self-evaluation process, which includes the views of parents and children, to identify strengths and areas for development
- provide children with more opportunities for investigations of the natural world, in order to make observations and talk about changes in the outdoor environment.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall staff demonstrate a sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills to promote the learning and development of young children. The key person gathers some information from parents about their children at the start, although this does not include information with regard to children's starting points and individual development. Therefore, this does not fully support staff in planning effectively for children's overall learning from the start.

Children's individual files, which contain photographs, observations and some examples of their work, are in place and the educational programmes sufficiently cover the prime areas of learning to enable children to make steady progress. Through the staff member's satisfactory observation and planning, children are provided with a suitable range of activities to support their individual development. Staff play alongside children, providing meaningful praise, encouraging children to explore and enjoy their time at the setting. As a result, children are making satisfactory progress in preparation for the next stage in their learning.

The setting is lively and friendly and children are sufficiently engaged in activities throughout their time there, children enjoy the activities and are keen to become involved. Staff know the children well and combine this with adequate teaching to extend children's learning. For example, they know children enjoy craft activities and provide them with a suitable range of tools and resources to support their play. Children are learning how to use scissors independently and safely because the staff support them and allow them sufficient time to finish their task without interrupting them. They use language, such as, 'super star' and 'well done' providing children with a sense of achievement in their new skills and learning. Some staff are able to sustain children's interest by asking questions to encourage them to think about what they are doing and extend their language. For example, as children enthusiastically engage in playing with the musical instruments, staff encourage them to think about the sounds they make. They teach children some new words as they use language such as 'click and clack' as they shake the various instruments. Children learn to listen carefully to staff member's requests as they encourage them to move slowly and faster in time to their musical instruments. This not only supports children's communication skills, but also provides them with some opportunities to problem solve. For example, they learn about rhythms, understanding words such as faster and slower. In addition, they complete various puzzles and shape sorters, discussing shape, size and measure which in turn helps to support their early maths skills. Children clearly love creative play and with staff support engage in imaginative play. For example, staff talk about the babies becoming hungry as children lovingly place dolls into high chairs. They make a pretend meal using the various pots and pans available in the role play areas and with staff members they discuss and recall events at home. For example, they state how they help their mummy look after the baby at home. Staff members are extremely kind and caring towards the children which provides children with a sense of belonging which in turn supports their personal, social and emotional development. Throughout the setting children confidently approach staff for comfort and reassurance and staff respond to them with warmth and purposeful care. They handle babies sensitively and place them gently on mats who then gaze at the colourful mobiles above them. This also provides babies with good opportunities to be active as they freely move their arms and legs in response to the sensory experiences they enjoy. Outdoors children love to be active as they skilfully pedal three wheeled bikes and scooters and carefully manoeuvre around one another. However, the outdoor environment is bland and unattractive for young children. They do not have sufficient opportunities to explore and experiment using natural resources. This means their rapidly developing understanding of the world is not promoted as well as possible.

Staff gather some information from parents when their children first start at the nursery. This includes details of the child's family members, care routines, favourite toys, dietary

and medical requirements. Staff members interact with parents on a day-by-day basis and children settle well when they start attending the nursery. Some efforts are made to engage parents in their children's learning, to keep them informed or encourage them to look at, or contribute to, their child's learning journal. However, these are not robust enough to engage them fully in their children's learning at home and do not sufficiently support the continuity of children's learning between home and the setting. Parents spoken to at the inspection are complimentary of the care provided to their children and state the staff team are very welcoming friendly and supportive to them and their children.

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

Staff greet children and parents warmly when they arrive at the nursery, which creates a friendly atmosphere. Children form positive and warm relationships with the staff and each other. They develop close bonds with staff members, in particular, to their key persons. They give staff cuddles and approach them confidently for support or to join in with their play. Relevant information collected at the onset of the placements ensures the smooth transition between home and the setting. Good ongoing working relationships with the local school also ensure smooth transitions as children continue their education.

Resources are well organised and are accessible throughout the setting so children can make independent choices about their play. Children's independence is supported by resources being stored at their height displaying pictures and some labels to encourage them to choose for themselves. Staff show a good understanding of how to deal with behaviour issues, which take account of the children's ages and stage of development. For example, to avoid squabbles they intervene sensitively and offer children alternative toys, explaining they must be kind towards their friends. Older children attending the out of school scheme are polite and respectful towards the younger children, which in turn supports younger children's understanding of good behaviour well. Staff act as a positive role model, encouraging children to use their manners and offering praise during their play experiences. This helps to promote children's social skills and boosts their self-esteem. Children are given regular opportunities to visit the different early years age groups between the three rooms used in the setting and often play outdoors together. This helps children become familiar with their new environment and other staff so they are emotionally prepared for their move to the next age group.

Children benefit from a range of foods that contribute towards a balanced diet and which also take account of their individual needs. They are beginning to understand the importance of hand washing before eating and do this routinely. Staff follow appropriate hygiene routines when changing children's nappies to prevent cross-infection. They have robust systems in place to record all nappy changes, indicating the time that this is carried out and the information is recorded and shared with parents. Timely reminders from the staff help children to understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they remind them not to climb on the tables to further ensure their own safety and that of others. Children are supported to use the range of resources, tools and equipment safely as staff guide them but enable them to take appropriate risk. For example, by using scissors to cut with, children demonstrate how to do so safely.

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

The manager and staff demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. All staff are checked thoroughly before being employed. Children are safeguarded and protected as the manager and staff understand their responsibilities towards the children at the setting and know what steps to take if they have concerns about a child. The manager and staff have attended safeguarding training and relevant guidance documents are in place to support practice. The nursery building is safe and secure for children's use. For example, risk assessments along with daily checks are conducted, which ensure that any possible hazards are identified and minimised for children. Visitors are required to sign in and out and children are supervised appropriately using correct adult to child ratios throughout the day. This helps to keep children safe.

The setting benefit from a long standing staff team who know the children and the setting well. Appropriate routines are in place for the recruitment of new staff and an induction process ensures they can become familiar with policies and procedures of the setting. There are satisfactory systems in place for regular staff appraisals and staff development is encouraged through access to training through the local authority. In addition, staff meetings are used to cascade additional relevant training to the whole group. The manager and staff have a sufficient understanding of the learning and development requirements. Satisfactory systems have been developed to ensure sufficient monitoring of the education programmes, which ensures children are sufficiently challenged and motivated. As a result, children make some progress in their learning. Self-evaluation lacks rigour and fails to incorporate the views of parents and children to support continuous improvements to the provision. Some efforts have been made, for example, actions to address previous weaknesses have been taken and management have completed an evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses, although this was completed some time ago and is not current. A suggestion box is available for parent's use to encourage their contribution, however this is not used and the nursery have not explored more effective ways. Therefore, progress to improve overall outcomes for children is slow.

Positive working relationships have been developed between the parents and they are made aware of all operational procedures. The written policies and procedures and noticeboards provide parents with a suitable range of information on the service provided for their children. This ensures that they are aware of how the setting works. They are kept suitably informed about their child's time at the setting mostly through verbal feedback. However, partnerships with parents are not fully developed to ensure children's learning is supported effectively between the home and the setting. Therefore, this has a negative impact on children's overall learning and development. Satisfactory working relationships are in place with the local school and children that attend more than one setting are supported appropriately as the staff liaise with the teaching staff at other settings in order to provide consistency in their learning.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY346062
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	941860
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	66
Number of children on roll	89
Name of provider	Ashington Minors Ltd
Date of previous inspection	03/10/2011
Telephone number	01670 858887

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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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