

Spotted Dog Children's Centre

Clawthorpe Hall Business Centre, Clawthorpe, CARNFORTH, Lancashire, LA6 1NU

Inspection date

24/03/2014

Previous inspection date

02/09/2009

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 2

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

- Teaching is good and effectively engages children to develop their communication and thinking skills, which has a positive impact on all other areas of learning.
- Leadership and management are very strong, resulting in practitioners who clearly know and understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies are very effective. This results in continuity for children in their learning and valuable support for children and their families in helping children progress further.
- Children are effectively safeguarded because practitioners are vigilant, suitably trained in child protection and have robust policies and procedures in place.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Some areas in the toddler room are not as well resourced as others to support children in developing their research and reading skills further.
- There is scope to enhance the already very good performance management arrangements so that practitioners gain more responsibility for monitoring their own practice.

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 and talked with children and practitioners in all three playrooms and during outdoor play.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and deputies, taking their views into account.
- The inspector spoke to parents and carers, taking their views into account.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children, the provider's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspector viewed a wide range of documents, including children's files and assessments, planning, relevant policies and procedures and risk assessments.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the two deputy managers.

Inspector

Janice Caryl

Full report

Information about the setting

Spotted Dog Children's Centre nursery opened in 1991, relocating to its current premises in 2005 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in Clawthorpe Hall Business Centre in the parish of Burton-in-Kendal, Cumbria, and is privately owned. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from three rooms on two floors and a separate large ground floor room. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. There is an out of school service and holiday club for children of school age. These children have access to a room in a separate building within the grounds. The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above, including the manager who holds Qualified Teacher Status and Early Years Professional Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 142 children attending, 96 of whom are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The setting is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- promote early literacy skills further, particularly in the toddler room, by having more themed fact and fiction books and magazines available in the different areas
- enhance staff development even further, by giving them responsibilities for monitoring each other, for example, by introducing peer to peer observations.

Inspection judgements

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

Teaching is good because practitioners have the knowledge and understanding of how children learn through play. Recent training has inspired them to initiate new ideas, broadening and adding depth to the activities and opportunities provided for children. Consequently, a variety of teaching methods effectively support children in making good progress. For example, children excitedly and stealthily follow practitioners as they make their way to the 'bridge' where the 'troll' lives. They listen hard, tiptoe and negotiate the tyres, gaining control over their physical movements. They are encouraged to think about what they find and discuss different concepts, thus developing good communication and language skills. Practitioners enhance their learning as children are allowed to take the lead, change the focus of the activity and develop their own ideas. As a result, children

improve their critical thinking skills, learn new vocabulary and gain a strong sense of achievement. Children in pre-school enjoy taking part in mathematics and number activities. Practitioners teach children to recognise and write numerals on the whiteboard. Children are challenged to think deeply as they enthusiastically participate by calling the number and working out which numbers are missing. As a result, children, including those with English as an additional language, are learning how to listen and respond to instruction and develop writing and numeracy skills. Furthermore, they are acquiring the necessary skills in preparation for future learning in school. Practitioners working with babies and younger children support their development through sensory exploration. Practitioners encourage children to feel the sand and talk to them about how the sand feels. Baskets of objects entice children to explore and make sounds with the musical instrument. As a result, younger children begin to differentiate between noises developing their hearing and auditory skills. Children happily share books and stories with practitioners who encourage repetition of words and phrases, helping develop language and vocabulary. Children in the toddler room enjoy a range of activities that encourage exploratory play. For example, they enjoy building in the construction area, developing their hand-eye coordination and imagination. They help to create displays about building and construction, developing their creative skills as they learn. The role play area enables children to play and re-create experiences familiar to them, supporting their personal, social and emotional development and imagination. The reading/cosy area contains books that children enjoy looking at and sharing with practitioners. However, there is a lack of books and literature in other areas, such as in the construction and role play. Consequently, there is a reduction in opportunities for children to further develop their early literacy and basic research skills.

Practitioners support children in making good progress at the nursery. This is because they are proficient at assessing children's abilities and planning to meet their needs and interests. Information gathered from parents when children first start helps key persons get to know children. Observations completed on children are assessed to show their development and specific interests. From these, practitioners plan next steps to support them further. The environment is subsequently enhanced and specific activities planned to meet children's needs. Consequently, children enjoy their learning and make good progress in relation to their starting points on entry. Learning journals contain a very good account of children's experiences in the nursery. Photographs, observations from nursery and home and assessments are informative and show how practitioners track children's progress on a termly basis. As a result, it is clearly how well they are developing. The learning journals and progress summative sheets for all children, including the younger children, are shared with parents and carers, keeping them fully informed.

Parents continue to be involved in their children's learning and contribute by providing information and observations from home. The 'tell me tree' evolves as leaves and blossom are added to it as parents and children share experiences and favourite activities. As a result, managers and practitioners share and build on children's experiences from home. Daily verbal discussions and home to nursery communication books enable parents to contribute in other ways, encouraging a wider range of participation. In addition, they are given tracking sheets, where they are invited to give a short account of how they feel their children are developing and their interests. As a result, the continuity between home and the nursery is strong and secure.

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

Children's emotional well-being is fostered well. The room leaders observe and monitor children closely on entry into the setting, or as they move rooms. This ensures that children are matched to the most appropriate key person, enabling strong relationships and attachments to be forged. This results in happy, confident children who settle more easily and enjoy their nursery experiences. Family books are created which contain photographs for children to share and enjoy. As a result, children make strong links between home and the nursery, helping them feel emotionally secure. Practitioners support children well through change and transition, by helping them settle into new rooms. The key persons exchange important information with the room leaders and spend time with children in their new environment. Consequently, children become familiar with their new surroundings and other adults, help make the move seamless. Parents and carers are involved also, and information in the 'all about me' books is updated. This ensures that children likes, dislikes and interests are current so that their needs are fully met.

Practitioners encourage children to be independent autonomous learners. Young children in the baby room are taught about personal hygiene by being given their own cloths to wash their hands before and after having their meals and snacks. Practitioners talk to them as they have their nappies changed explaining what is happening, and how it is better to feel clean and dry. Children in toddler room are competent at accessing the sink and washing their hands, developing a deeper understanding of its importance. Consequently, older children attending pre-school have a good understanding and are establishing good secure, hygiene habits. Children receive home cooked, fresh and nutritional meals and snacks or they have a packed lunch. Managers support parents by offering advice on how to pack a healthy lunch box, to ensure consistency at meal times. The whole nursery takes part in a 'healthy body, happy me' theme in which activities are focused around healthy eating, keeping physically active and learning about hygiene. As a result, the routines already established are reinforced in fun and exciting ways. Children's behaviour is well managed in the nursery. This is because practitioners set clear boundaries and guidelines and are consistent in their approach. Children are invited to be involved in setting their own goals, monitoring their own achievements and managing their own behaviour, relative to their age. This results in children who gain an understanding of the difference between right and wrong and how actions can affect others.

Managers and practitioners teach children to develop good, positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy through outdoor play and activities. In addition, they support children in developing healthy dispositions to understanding risk and managing it effectively, relative to their age and abilities. For example, the outdoor play space offers a variety of fun and exciting opportunities to climb, run, hide and explore. Children have great fun climbing on the large tree, tiptoeing across the bark, stepping in and out of the tyres and playing in the mud kitchen. As a result, they develop different and challenging physical abilities. Older children support younger children as they hold their hands, exploring how the bark slithers down the drain pipe. Practitioners challenge children to reach further so that it

falls faster, helping children to stretch their limbs as they investigate, learn and develop in confidence. Children in pre-school have the added advantage of learning about risk as they play, explore and learn new skills in the forest school area. Children gain an insight into the natural world as they count the rings on the cut down trees, hunt for bugs and develop their physical skills further as they negotiate the undergrowth. Practitioners, trained in providing forest school activities, ensure children are kept safe as they complete thorough risk assessments and remain vigilant at all times.

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

Leadership is strong in the nursery, with the well-qualified management team having a positive impact on its quality. Staff recruitment is robust to ensure that adults caring and providing education for children are safe, well qualified and hold the necessary skills. Once recruited, a clear and rigorous induction takes place where practitioners are supervised and monitored to support them in their knowledge and understanding of the operational management. In addition, the managers utilise practitioners' existing skills efficiently by matching them to specific roles and responsibilities. This results in a steady team of professional practitioners who know and understand their individual responsibilities and provide best practice. Children are helped to be kept safe from harm or abuse because practitioners are fully trained in child protection procedures. They demonstrate a thorough understanding of what to do should they have a concern over any children. In addition, information and emergency contact numbers are readily available should they be required. Consequently, support for children is immediately addressed, should it be necessary. Policies and procedures are well written and clear. This helps to ensure that they are understood by everyone so that they are adhered to more effectively. Room checks and robust risk assessments ensure that any hazards are effectively minimised to ensure children's safety. All staff are qualified to give first aid, meaning that children are effectively supported in the case of minor injury or emergency.

The management and practitioners have a very good understanding of how children learn. This contributes to ensuring a broad and balanced programme of activities and learning opportunities takes place. Children's overall progress is monitored closely by room leaders and management. This includes monitoring of specific groups of children so that planning is focused and meets specific needs and abilities. In addition, any gaps in children's learning are identified early so that intervention can be initiated, as necessary. The regular and efficient monitoring of practitioners skills enhances all aspects of how children are supported through effective teaching methods. Appraisals and supervision meetings held recurrently provide opportunities to discuss practice and identify specific targets and training needs. As a result, children benefit because practitioners are thoroughly motivated, enthusiastic and well trained. Furthermore, children with health issues are cared for by practitioners who are effectively trained to meet their individual needs. However, although practitioners are monitored effectively and efficiently by managers, there is scope to improve the process by giving practitioners more responsibility to monitor and learn from each other. Regular team meetings at different levels ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting. For example, practitioners are supported in reflecting and reviewing the policies and procedures through amusing and innovative

ways.

Self-evaluation and the drive for continual improvement are excellent. There is a collective approach to self-reflection with advice from internal and external sources used effectively. For example, practitioners visit and share practice with other settings. In addition, they research and discuss good and outstanding practice, developing and cultivating new ideas to help them improve further. Equally and significantly, parents and children's comments, ideas and suggestions are valued, respected and encompassed. Room leaders and practitioners reflect on the practice and provision in their own rooms and set individual improvement plans. These are discussed at meetings and fed into the whole setting improvement plan, meaning that all areas are effectively covered. Furthermore, the management and practitioners are currently striving to achieve a quality award, helping enforce the continual improvements being made and benefitting children even further. The nursery team has strong partnerships and relationships with parents, carers and other agencies. There is a wealth of information available for parents as they enter the nursery. Open evenings are highly valued by parents because they are able to enjoy viewing their children's work and talk with managers and practitioners in a relaxed atmosphere. They comment on how much they enjoy tasting some of the meals their children have and viewing the work they do. Links with the local children's centre means that parents are supported in helping enhance children's progress and receive appropriate support where necessary. For example, specialist support workers and speakers are invited to hold sessions and workshops in the nursery, making a strong contribution to meeting children's needs. Likewise, the nursery has developed strong links with local schools and nurseries. Good practice is shared and links are made to support children in transition, resulting in strong and secure partnerships.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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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	EY298397
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	856467
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	142
Name of provider	Deborah Duckett and Claire Robinson Partnership
Date of previous inspection	02/09/2009
Telephone number	01524 784321

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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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Piccadilly Gate
Store St
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M1 2WD

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