

Cotton Tails Day Nursery and Link Club

Cotton Tails Nursery, Mercer Street, Burtonwood, WARRINGTON, WA5 4JJ

Inspection date	28/02/2014
Previous inspection date	08/01/2013

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

- The enthusiastic and caring staff team ensure that good relationships between the children and themselves are well established. Consequently, children have formed strong bonds and they are happy and settled within nursery.
- Children are making good progress in their learning as teaching is good. Staff fully understand how children learn through their play. They have created an interesting play environment, which encourages children to be confident and exploratory learners.
- The recently revised policies for safeguarding are securely understood by staff at all levels. The premises and equipment are well organised and staff implement consistent practice for the care of the children, which means their safety and well-being is being actively promoted.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Opportunities to enhance the ways staff support children to extend their interest in numbers and number problems when outdoors have not been fully considered.
- There is scope to extend further the wide range of information already gathered about children on entry by asking parents to contribute their views to the staffs' initial baseline assessment, so that staff can more swiftly plan to help each child make even more progress.

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

- Prior to the inspection, the inspector viewed the information about the provider and took into consideration any information held by Ofsted. The inspector also took account of the arrangements for self-evaluation and the views of children and those parents spoken to during the inspection.
- The inspector observed activities in the five playrooms, the outside learning environment and viewed equipment being used on the day of the inspection.
- The inspector held meetings with the owner, the manager, the deputy manager and the Early Years Professional, as well as holding discussions with other members of staff.
- The inspector viewed a number of legally required documents, including children's assessments, planning, staff qualifications, vetting and suitability checks and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager of the interactions between staff and children and the learning taking place during lunchtime in the pre-school room.

Inspector

Frank Kelly

Full report

Information about the setting

Cotton Tails Day Nursery and Link Club was registered in 2012 and is on the Early Years Register. It is one of two settings run by a limited company. It operates from a converted school building and is situated in the Burtonwood area of Warrington. The nursery serves the immediate locality and the surrounding areas.

There are currently 22 staff working directly with the children, all of whom have an appropriate early years qualification. These include, one member of staff who holds Early Years Professional Status and one member of staff with Qualified Teacher Status, one member of staff with Graduate Status, one member of staff working towards Graduate Status and one member of staff working towards an early years foundation degree and 16 members of staff have qualifications at level 3. One member of staff has a qualification at level 2 and is currently working towards a higher level qualification.

The provision opens Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 6pm, all year round with the exception of bank holidays. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children are cared for in five rooms and have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The playrooms are all on ground level, although, there are some single steps into some of the playrooms. There are currently 123 children in the early years age range attending. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery also receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the opportunities for children to experience an outside environment that is rich in the use of numbers and creates opportunities to foster their mathematical understanding by; for example, using number lines, providing groups of materials to sort, include games that allow children to realise that anything can be counted, including hops, steps and claps
- increase the precision of the assessment of children's learning and development even further; by seeking parents' views on the base-line assessments created by staff, in order to identify more of what they know their children can already do and swiftly plan to help each child make even more progress.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a high-level of awareness about how children's play acts as a vehicle, which supports them to learn effectively. Playrooms are pleasant and inviting to the children and have well-chosen toys and resources that capture their interest and are developmentally appropriate. They provide a firm foundation for children's learning and span fully the seven areas of learning. Staff organise equipment to support and extend the children's developing needs and abilities. For example, in the baby room, staff provide walking frame trolleys that encourage and allow the tentative walkers to gain independence and support while mastering their physical coordination. In the early learners group, the staffs' awareness of children's pleasure and enjoyment to sing songs is fostered further, as they ensure they have access to musical instruments. They encourage children to use the instruments when singing favourite rhymes, such as those about a sheep. They understand by doing this it extends children's communication and language, their physical dexterity and their social experiences as they develop a sense of sharing experiences and being with others. During such activities, children beam with delight as they shake the instruments and follow their natural desire to 'bob' up and down in time to the singing. Staff throughout nursery add new materials to the familiar activities to entice children's interest, for example, they add glitter to the water tray.

Staff undertake regular and accurate assessment of the children's stages of development. They use a tracking system to support them to identify if children are showing development typical for their age. It is also used to identify if there are gaps in an area of the children's learning. These systems for assessment allow for staff to plan activities that are suitable to meet the individual child's needs but also using children's current interests. For example, in the baby room, staff noticed that some children were crawling under the cots and laughing. They tied a sheet between two cots, placed cushions and books underneath to create a den. This allowed children to continue to crawl, be in an enclosed space but also provided an interesting place that introduced and encouraged them to investigate books in a different way. Parents are engaged in sharing information when children start and staff undertake a series of observations from which they create an overview, which they use as a base-line assessment to plan for children's future learning. However, while staff provide a regular summary of children's current development on a regular basis throughout the year, they do not currently consult parents about their initial base-line assessment, so as to gain an even more accurate starting point. For children aged two years, a progress check is completed and parents are consulted about the check and invited to add their comments should they wish to do so. The setting has secure systems for engaging other services and professionals should children require early intervention or support to help them make the best progress based on their needs and abilities.

Throughout nursery, children are busy and eager to explore toys and equipment. For example, in the 'early learners' room, children dig in the sand and use their imagination as they play with the trucks and other small world vehicles. They use crayons to create marks and pictures on both sides of the paper, which demonstrates their growing awareness of their early literacy and helps them to develop their ability to hold a pencil correctly, so promotes their future ability to write. The pre-school group uses paper and pencils outdoors during role play situations where they 'take orders' for 'ice creams' demonstrating their awareness that print carries meaning. Children from the 'tweenies' room spend long periods of time making marks with brushes and water, along the ground

and on the fence. Throughout the nursery, there are lots of visual representations of numbers and labels. For children in the younger age ranges, staff use songs and rhymes to introduce counting, while the older children are encouraged to use them in daily routines and activities. Consequently, children in pre-school enjoy engaging with adults in impromptu counting and calculation. For example, they gleefully talk about significant numbers, such as the number four, and hold the correct number of fingers up to demonstrate their knowledge of counting. When encouraged, they know that there are five children in the group and that two are girls and three are boys. However, staff have not fully exploited this interest in number problem solving while children are in the outdoor area. For example, including number lines and numerals on the parking bays and wheeled equipment or creating number and counting games with things, such as claps and hops. Nevertheless, children do count and recognise numbers on the hopscotch mat. The range of activities and the good staff support means children of all ages are developing skills to investigate and explore how things work. These skills and attitudes support their next stages of life and prepare them well for starting school.

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

The nursery has effective systems for the engagement of parents and supporting children as they prepare to start nursery. Regular visits based on the children's needs and growing confidence are undertaken. During these visits, information between the staff and parents is shared about the child's unique needs and about the nursery routines. These visits help to build relationships and support the children very well to settle. This is further fostered as whenever possible children's key persons' attend to the children's personal care, such as nappy changing. During such times, staff talk and sing to the children, which helps them to feel safe and secure. Consequently, children arrive eagerly, separate with ease and settle quickly. Parents' commented on the professionalism of staff in supporting them with their children. They particularly like the arrangements for supporting children as they make the transitions through nursery. Systems are in place for working with other agencies and services should children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Effective systems are implemented regarding supporting the older children as they prepare to move onto school. This includes talking to children about school and sharing information with their new teachers. Consequently, children are supported well and their sense of feeling safe remains, which fosters their well-being. Younger children are tentative when strangers first come into the room but with gentle reassurance from familiar adults, they are soon happily engaged in their play.

Staffs' high expectations means children are developing the skills for independence, which in turn supports them to develop and consolidate their skills across the prime areas of learning. They eagerly help to dress themselves when preparing to go outdoors. At lunchtime, children are invited to be helpers to set out the tables. For example, children in pre-school are encouraged to colour match the cups and plates and ensure that there is sufficient cutlery for each place on the table. Children then look for their name card as part of the ways the staff support their developing early reading and letter recognition. They have some opportunities to serve themselves, such as choosing their portion size of vegetables and pouring their own drinks. The menus provided offer children a range of tasty food that is freshly prepared by the cook. Meals and snacks support the children to

develop a taste for a healthy diet and include a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Children demonstrate an understanding of the benefits of foods as they talk about carrots being good for them.

Children enjoy being physically active and staff ensure that they have a chance to rest and exercise as it meets their needs through the day. Indoors, there are vigorous 'music and movement' sessions during which children stretch and reach, jump, hop and turn. They use wheeled vehicles, such as the taxi bicycle and scooters, with speed and accuracy as they negotiate the obstacles of other equipment and their peers. This also develops their turn taking and social skills. Children enjoy climbing and sliding and staff help the younger children learn about their own safety and that of others. They remind children about not pushing and what might happen if they do. Children enjoy being outdoors and they explore their environment, for example, digging for worms. Staff themselves provide positive role models as they are very calm and polite in their interactions. They praise children when they listen or help. Children engage visitors politely as they say 'excuse me, can you play with me?' They are confident to explore difference or things less familiar to them, for example, names of visitors. Books, dolls and other small world figures reflect the diversity within today's society. These allow children to learn about the similarities and differences of their own and other people's cultures and lifestyles.

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

The nursery is effectively organised and managed. The owner and staff demonstrate a good understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The recent revisions made to the safeguarding procedures and updated in-house training means that the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting children's safety are strong. Recruitment and selection of staff is robustly undertaken and all staff are required to complete a relevant vetting procedure, such as a Disclosure and Barring Service Check. Records of such checks, along with qualifications, any ongoing mentoring, performance and training is retained. The owner is proactive in supporting staff to undertake higher levels of training through financial support or providing staff with non-contact time with the children to undertake their studies. The policies and procedures for safeguarding and protecting the children are now fully reflective of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and compliant with the expectations of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Procedures for safeguarding and protecting children, include very clear information about the steps to take and who and how to report any child protection concerns that staff have. All staff have access to the contact details of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the owner should they wish to implement whistleblowing procedures. Regular updates are presented during team meetings and additional updated training for some staff is being arranged. Consequently, staff at all levels are able to demonstrate very well through discussion their good understanding of these procedures.

The premises are well maintained and presented. Risk assessments are in place and staff undertake regular checks of the premises and the equipment throughout the day. Security is maintained robustly and staff supervise the children at all times, including when the younger children are resting. Fire safety meets requirements with staff checking the

detection system regularly, extinguishers being serviced annually and drills undertaken with the children. Safety features fitted, include finger guards to doors and an emergency grab bag is located by exit doors, which includes a first aid kit and blankets for use in emergency situations. Children are well supported by a staff team that has a wide range of experience and qualifications. Supervisions and appraisals are undertaken, which supports staffs' continued development. Consequently, the staff team are enthusiastic and committed to providing a good quality service for the children. The Early Years Professional, alongside the manager and one of the owners, monitor the learning programme and children's assessment. They do this to develop the activities provided, range of resources and check that the summaries of children's development are secure. Consequently, all children are progressing well, enjoying an interesting learning environment and have good support from the adults who care for them. The owner demonstrates enthusiasm and a commitment to developing a quality service. He spends time each week in nursery, talking to staff, children and their parents. He has a clear plan for the development of the premises, equipment and staff team. Parents are consulted via questionnaires and their responses are viewed and acted upon. They commented on the quality of the service and their observations of the continual improvements within the nursery and equipment since the last inspection. Recommendations from the last inspection have been fully addressed with children enjoying opportunities to explore equipment and activities more fully as staff resist the temptation to rush them or take over. For example, children under two years are allowed to explore fitting shapes into an inset board with minimal adult input. Good hygiene procedures are undertaken when changing nappies, which minimises the risk of cross-infection and promotes the children's health. This demonstrates the management teams' ability to promote and sustain continuous improvement.

Partnership with parents is very good in most instances. The setting provides a wide range of information in a variety of ways. Displays, newsletters and updates on the nursery's social networking site are appreciated by the parents. Parents' views are sought through discussions, meetings and questionnaires and on a daily basis, staff share information about the children at arrival and collection times. The setting has secure systems in place for engaging other services and professionals. They provide a suitable framework for staff to work closely, so as to support children to not be disadvantaged and make good progress given their individual needs or starting points.

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	EY447874
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	951889
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	123
Name of provider	Kids on Top Ltd
Date of previous inspection	08/01/2013
Telephone number	01925224735

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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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