

Early Learners

Thornley Primary School, Coopers Terrace, Thornley, Durham, DH6 3DZ

Inspection date	22/09/2014
Previous inspection date	28/09/2010

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 quality of teaching is consistently good and staff are skilled in extending children's self-chosen play. As a result, children make good progress in relation to their starting points and are keen, interested learners.
- The key-person system is effective in helping children to feel safe and secure. This is because staff use settling-in procedures to gather information about children's individual needs, which has a positive impact on their emotional well-being.
- Parent partnership working is a key strength of this setting. There are highly successful strategies in place to involve parents in their children's development, which means they are supported to extend learning at home.
- Staff fully support children through their transitions and have clear procedures in place to share information about children's learning. Consequently, children benefit from continuity of care and learning across all settings they attend, such as schools.
- The manager and staff team fully understand the safeguarding and welfare requirements. Therefore, children are kept safe and are protected from harm.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not always make the most of opportunities to model clear language to all children. As a result, children's acquisition of communication skills is not sharply focused.

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 experiences for children in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- The inspector looked at children's learning journey records and planning documentation.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and spoke to staff throughout the inspection.
- The inspector checked the evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents/carers on the day and their views were taken into account.
- The inspector held a professional discussion with the manager and checked self-evaluation evidence.

Inspector

Michelle Lorains

Full report

Information about the setting

Early Learners nursery was registered in 2006 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a purpose built premises in the Thornley area of Durham and is privately owned and managed. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from two rooms and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level three, including two staff with Early Years Foundation degrees and one with a diploma in Early Years Practice. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round, except for Christmas and bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 29 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-year-old children. It supports a number of 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:

- enhance young children's communication and language skills by modelling clear language and sharply focusing their next steps.

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching is consistently good and, as a result, children make good progress across the seven areas of learning. Staff are skilled at extending children's learning through a balance of planned and self-chosen experiences. For example, staff invite children to join in a focused activity to extend their sensory development. They delight in exploring the leaves and paints as they make prints onto paper. Children choose to extend the activity into making marks with their favourite toys and enjoy using fire engines to see printed tracks. Staff support children to keep trying and they have high expectations of them. As a result, they develop confidence to try new things and show a strong sense of achievement. For example, staff encourage children to use their hands to explore paints as part of their next steps and offer words of praise. Children talk excitedly about getting their hands messy and involve their peers in their investigations. Babies benefit from staff who know their interests well and are able to use them to develop skills in the prime areas of learning. For example, staff support younger children to complete simple peg jigsaw puzzles and encourage them to pull themselves up to begin to walk, developing both large and small muscle skills.

Children benefit from flexible planning which is based on their individual interests and next steps. Consequently, they are engaged and focused on experiences for extended lengths

of time. However, there are times when staff miss opportunities to model language to children clearly and next steps do not have a sharp focus on young children's language development. This does not support them to make the best possible progress. Staff make observations of children and use the information gathered to plan enhancements to the resources around the setting. This means that as children explore the environment their interest is captured in different areas. For example, staff have recently enhanced the outdoor area, so it contains a mud kitchen which children use to dig and play imaginatively.

Staff complete regular assessments of children and share children's progress with parents. For example, parents are provided with a written summary of children's progress when they are aged between two and three years. Learning journeys and home diaries are used to share photographs of children's achievements and parents make contributions by including experiences children enjoy at home. This is then used to inform and enhance planning, which promotes continuity of learning for children. Staff show commitment to supporting parents to extend children's learning at home. For example, they provide story sacks for children to take home and hold stay-and-play sessions for parents to join in with activities in the setting. There are effective methods of information sharing with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists and health visitors. As a result, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and they make good progress in relation to their starting points.

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

The key-person system effectively supports children to make positive relationships and settle in quickly. This is because staff provide visits to gather information from parents in relation to children's individual routines and preferences, which they use collate a care plan for each child. Care plans also include any information regarding extra support children receive from other professionals, such as speech and language therapists. Therefore, staff ensure children's individual needs are fully met and they benefit from continuity of care with contribution from all those involved. Children are supported to be independent and show readiness for school. They benefit from sharing the toilet facilities with older children within the main school and have hour long transition visits with their key person. Babies' needs are well met and they have established individual routines which staff respond to quickly. For example, they prepare comfortable areas for babies to enjoy their bottles and have one to one time which has a positive impact on their emotional well-being.

Children learn about what contributes to a healthy lifestyle through clear and consistent messages from staff. For example, they enjoy healthy cooked meals each day and staff talk to them about the food they eat. Children develop self-help skills as staff support them to use a small knife and fork to eat their lunch and encourage them to drink from beakers without lids. Staff encourage children to wash their hands at appropriate times throughout the day and they enjoy a range of physical activities, which are shown through photographs on the healthy display. Children develop awareness of how to stay safe and they learn to manage appropriate risks for themselves. For example, children are supported to negotiate spaces around others in the outdoor area and take care with the

bubbly water near the babies. Behaviour is managed very positively and staff are good role models for children. Consequently, children are extremely well mannered and begin to share with minimal support.

The environments indoors and outdoors are inviting and stimulating for children. Babies benefit from low-level resources to stimulate their senses, such as wall instruments and a gazebo to sleep underneath with twinkling lights. The atmosphere in the baby room is very calm and staff show creative flair as they develop feathered mobiles and trees which hang from the ceiling for non-mobile babies to observe. Older children have separate indoor space where they can move around the room and explore resources independently, which encourages them to make decisions about their learning. For example, children relax in the cosy area with stories while others explore the leaves in the interest tray. The outdoor area is accessed at all times and children often choose to play imaginatively outdoors. Staff interact well with children and enhance resources to extend and develop children's physical skills. For example, children thoroughly enjoy singing songs and bouncing balls with the large parachute. Staff are knowledgeable and have a clear understanding of how to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work professionally alongside the special educational needs coordinator to ensure resources are suitably challenging and appropriately placed, which contributes to their good progress.

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

All staff have a thorough understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements. For example, they regularly attend training to ensure they are confident to record and report concerns about children's welfare. The manager obtains Disclosure and Barring Service checks for all staff and those who have regular contact with children. Recruitment procedures are robust and references are requested for new staff members, along with a supervised induction period. Policies and procedures are kept up to date and are shared with parents to outline the settings priorities for children. Staff demonstrate their understanding of policies as they implement them during their everyday practice. For example, staff do not bring mobile phones into areas used by children and they practice fire drills on a regular basis. Areas are kept safe and secure for children to explore as the manager and staff team carry out daily health and safety checks alongside a robust set of risk assessments.

The manager demonstrates capability to monitor the teaching and learning within the provision, and this knowledge is passed onto staff members who effectively and accurately monitor children's progress. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children's needs are very effectively targeted and monitored by key people who ensure the gaps are narrowing by planning effective support and interventions. The manager ensures all staff are able to access support and training relevant to their needs following appraisals and supervisions. As a result, staff are pro-active in making improvements which benefit children. They demonstrate pride in their practice and work well together as a team. This contributes to the friendly and welcoming atmosphere of the setting. Systems are in place for students to be supported throughout

their programme of learning, and the setting currently works alongside local training providers to offer placements. Since the last inspection the manager and staff team have worked tirelessly to improve outcomes for children. For example, there are procedures on the wall for when children are ill, which includes information for parents regarding incubation periods to minimise the spread of infection. Observations of children link to the Early Years Foundation Stage and assessments are used to develop next steps for children, in order for them to make good progress across the seven areas of learning.

Self-evaluation demonstrates that the manager and staff team reflect on how to improve their practice and provision. Staff benefit from monitoring visits from the local authority. Staff monitor the areas used by children and regularly hold meetings where they discuss how areas can be improved for children to be more engaged in their play and use. This demonstrates the staff commitment to continuous improvement as they strive towards excellence. Parents demonstrate they feel valued and included by the manager and staff team as they leave written feedback and poems which are displayed on the wall. For example, one parent stated, 'the reassurance of knowing my child was nurtured everyday by such an amazing team of professionals is priceless'. Another parent highlighted key strengths of the setting as, 'transitions, inclusion of parents and mix of indoor/outdoor activities for children everyday'. This demonstrates strong partnerships with parents are well established.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	EY332809
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	862545
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	30
Name of provider	Thornley Children's Centre Limited
Date of previous inspection	28/09/2010
Telephone number	01429 820 280

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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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