

Early Learners

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



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| Inspection date | 11 December 2018 |
| Previous inspection date | 22 September 2014 |

| The quality and standards of the early years provision | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|----------|
| | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | | Good | 2 |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Outcomes for children | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Teaching is generally good with some outstanding aspects. Staff's interactions with children are particularly strong and contribute to the rapid progress that children make in their communication and language development and social skills.
- Staff form very close relationships with children and their families that help to promote children's emotional well-being to the highest levels. Children quickly develop strong self-esteem and they are remarkably at ease and confident. Their happiness and deep sense of belonging in nursery are clearly evident.
- Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the care their children receive. They are closely involved in their children's learning. They contribute to assessments and enjoy carrying out activities at home, which are set by staff, to help children to build on their knowledge and skills.
- Children make good progress in their learning. Those who are slower to make progress in some areas of learning benefit from extremely well-targeted teaching that helps them to catch up quickly.
- Partnerships with other settings that children attend are well embedded and help to support children extremely well during transitions to school. Reception class teachers say children from the nursery are very well prepared for school and comment on the high levels of independence and resilience that they have.
- Some activities and experiences provided for the oldest and most able children do not consistently provide the highest levels of challenge to extend their learning even further and support them to make even better progress.
- Staff have not made the best possible use of new skills and knowledge from their ongoing professional development to help raise the quality of teaching to consistently outstanding levels.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance learning plans for the oldest and most able children to help ensure activities consistently provide a high level of challenge and support them to make the best possible progress
- implement new learning from staff's very good professional development even more consistently to help raise the quality of teaching to even higher levels.

Inspection activities

- The inspector had a tour of the premises. She observed children at play in all rooms in the nursery and when attending sessions in the attached school nursery unit.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and deputy manager. She looked at a range of documents, including evidence of the suitability checks carried out on staff.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and assessed its impact on children's learning and development.
- The inspector observed and evaluated staff's teaching alongside the manager.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection. She spoke to some parents and took account of the views of others from written feedback provided.

Inspector
Clare Wilkins

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

Managers support staff well. They are developing further ways to evaluate and strengthen teaching; for instance, through staff observations and team meetings. This helps staff to reflect on their own practice and share expertise with others. Parents, children and other professionals are involved in evaluations of all areas of practice, which helps to inform comprehensive plans for ongoing improvement. For example, staff are using new ways to plan for children's learning and have begun to see improvements in how well children engage in activities. Safeguarding is effective. Staff know what to do if they are concerned about a child's welfare. Managers regularly review the progress that children make, which helps to identify children at risk of delay in their learning. They use their findings to focus staff's teaching on what children most need to learn next.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff are excellent communicators who expertly model language to children and listen intently to them, giving them plenty of time to think and respond. Children enjoy their learning. Staff are responsive to their interests and preferences, and shape activities and experiences accordingly. This helps to ignite their curiosity and they are keen to learn. Children develop good physical skills. Babies pull themselves up on thoughtfully placed furniture and take early steps when staff enthusiastically encourage them to walk towards them. Older children explore textures while making dough and staff provide tools intended to extend their physical skills. Children show a great interest in pretend play, which helps to develop their imaginative skills. They make 'tea' in the kitchen and talk to the dolls as they pretend to feed them and soothe them to sleep.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Children thrive in the extremely positive atmosphere where they benefit from an abundance of praise and encouragement. They glow with pride as staff enthusiastically celebrate every little achievement with them. Staff have an excellent understanding of children's emotional needs and manage their frustrations sensitively. Children learn right from wrong and their behaviour is remarkably good. They show concern and compassion for their friends and willingly help each other and cooperate. Children develop notably high levels of independence and are very keen to help and take responsibility. For example, they offer to pour drinks for their friends at snack time. Meals are relaxed, social occasions where children enjoy carefully planned, nutritious meals. They benefit from frequent opportunities for physical exercise both outdoors and in a large hall. Staff support them extremely well to develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Outcomes for children are good

Children achieve well and make good progress. Children whose achievements in communication and language development are below expectations for their age benefit from well-focused teaching that helps them to catch up in their learning. Children use a pencil to make marks as they write in greeting cards. They learn to solve simple number problems while working out if there are enough cups for their friends during snack. This helps them to develop key skills in mathematics and literacy that prepare them for later learning.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | EY332809 |
| Local authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 10069298 |
| Type of provision | Full day care |
| Registers | Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register |
| Day care type | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| Age range of children | 0 - 4 |
| Total number of places | 26 |
| Number of children on roll | 20 |
| Name of registered person | Thornley Children's Centre Limited |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP526195 |
| Date of previous inspection | 22 September 2014 |
| Telephone number | 01429 820 280 |

Early Learners registered in 2006. The nursery employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round, except for two weeks at Christmas and on bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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