

Inspection of Darwen Children's Centre

Lord Street, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 0HD

Inspection date: 11 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

The relatively new leadership team has worked hard to maintain good standards at the setting. Its drive and ability to reflect on its practice has led it to making beneficial changes. For example, leaders have introduced more natural resources for children to explore and learn by using all of their senses. Older children excitedly run their fingers down sticks and describe how they feel and smell. Younger children prod and poke play dough with their fingers, sticks and cones.

Children arrive in good spirits and are eager to settle down and play with the staff and their friends. Staff provide a warm welcome and encourage children to find their own names as they self-register. This helps children's early reading skills. Children show care and respect for each other. They invite their peers to play and share and take turns with the resources.

Partnerships with other agencies involved in children's care and learning are firmly established. Staff know the children and their families very well. They take time at the start of placement to gather a variety of information about children and their extended families. They use this to ensure that those children who require extra support receive this as soon as possible. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and children in receipt of funding, are supported to make good progress from the outset and throughout.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Leaders have recently implemented a more child-centred approach for assessment and planning. Staff use this, along with their good knowledge of children, to ensure activities capture children's individual interests. As result, all children are supported to make even better progress from their unique starting points.
- Children confidently explore the well-resourced learning environments, both indoors and outside. Overall, staff support children's play well and are good role models. They make good use of open questions to test children's thinking and recall. For example, they remember parts of a familiar story and talk about the characters in the book. Children are happy, settled and behave well, given their ages and stages of development.
- Overall, partnerships with parents are good. Staff place a lot of time and effort into ensuring children settle and get the help and support they need. Parents comment that staff are 'great' and that their children have 'come on a lot' since attending the setting. Parents feel staff are helpful and supportive of their own needs as well as the children's. Some regular assessments, such as the progress check for children aged between two and three years, are shared with parents.

That said, more can be done to ensure all parents are engaged fully in the life of the setting and are supported to extend children's learning at home.

- Children have active imaginations and enjoy making marks. Staff support them to develop their early writing skills and extend their thinking. Older children use a variety of different pens to write their names and draw their favourite pictures from a book. Younger children are encouraged to 'prod' and 'poke' play dough. This helps to develop their hand and finger muscles in preparation for holding a pen and, eventually, writing.
- A strong emphasis is placed on helping children and their families lead a healthy lifestyle and stay safe. Staff signpost parents to other available services within the children's centre, such as parenting advice and tips for healthy eating. These are followed through in the setting and contribute to children's continued good health and well-being. For example, children have daily access to fresh fruit and water and take part in activities about dental hygiene and self-care.
- Staff teach the basics well and provide children with a well-constructed curriculum that builds on their learning over time. During role play, children excitedly return to play in the 'lion's lair' they constructed the day before. Children are inquisitive and active learners. For example, they confidently gather resources to enhance their play and invite their friends inside the lair to 'stay safe'.
- Staff benefit from having access to training and, overall, are supported through effective coaching and supervision. However, there is scope to strengthen the feedback given to staff about the quality of their teaching so that they are supported to raise this to a consistently high level.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff attend regular training to ensure they are kept up to date with any legislative changes. They have a thorough understanding of all aspects of safeguarding and child protection issues. They are highly astute to the possible challenges that many families are likely to encounter and, in knowing this, have adopted effective support networks for early intervention. These have a significant impact on children's safety and well-being. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust. There are effective risk assessments in place. This further assures children's safety in the setting.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide more-targeted support for staff to include a sharper focus on raising the quality of teaching to the highest levels
- strengthen partnerships with parents to ensure they are kept fully informed of

their child's progress and supported to extend their child's learning at home.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY246291
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10071474
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	56
Number of children on roll	21
Name of registered person	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Registered person unique reference number	RP518323
Telephone number	01254 778900
Date of previous inspection	9 September 2015

Information about this early years setting

Darwen Children's Centre at the Lord Street site registered in 2003. The nursery employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, three staff hold early years qualifications at level 3 and one member of staff holds qualified teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are 8.45am until 11.45am. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Donna Birch

Inspection activities

- The qualified teacher and the inspector completed a learning walk. The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outside and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The qualified teacher completed a joint observation with the inspector.
- The inspector held a meeting with the senior leadership team. The inspector looked at relevant documentation and checked evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector spoke with the staff and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector considered the written feedback from parents. Additionally, the inspector spoke with a number of parents and took account of their views.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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