

Little Cubs Days Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY402820
Inspection date 15/06/2010
Inspector Pauline Pinnegar

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Little Cubs Day Nursery is a committee run setting. It is situated within the Xcel Centre, Aycliffe Business Park. It was re-registered in 2009 following relocation to the new premises. The setting operates from within four activity rooms and associated facilities within the centre. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm for 52 weeks of the year, excluding bank holidays.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 90 children under eight years at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. There are currently 49 children attending in this age group. The setting also offers care to children aged over five to 11 years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The setting currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 11 members of staff, including the manager. Most staff members hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager is working towards Early Years Professional Status. The setting receives support from the local authority and provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy and settled because the staff take great care to ensure they have all the relevant details required to respond well to their individual needs. This also ensures children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Systems for observations and assessments are developing. Effective partnerships are in place between parents, providers and other agencies, which means children receive an holistic approach to their individual care. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life of the nursery, and staff strive hard to help them to continue children's learning at home. The nursery is led by a motivated management team who embrace the process of self-evaluation and demonstrate a very positive attitude towards continuous improvement. Plans are in place to develop both the outdoor environment and toileting areas indoors.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve the opportunities for children aged two to three years to access fresh drinking water independently
- develop the outdoor environment to give children more opportunities for children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant
- further develop children's learning and development records to clearly highlight their next steps in their development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety is of paramount importance and key staff have attended training in safeguarding. A comprehensive policy is in place and staff are clear of whom to report concerns to so that children are always well protected. Detailed risk assessments are in place for the indoors, outside and outings. Access to the building is controlled efficiently so only people known to the setting can be admitted. The management and staff work well together to create an exciting, colourful and challenging environment where children eagerly join in with innovative activities, which helps them to learn through play and fun. Consequently, children are encouraged and inspired to achieve well and make good progress. The management team provides very clear guidance to the staff, and a comprehensive range of written policies and procedures are in place to fully support the running of the nursery. Thorough risk assessments of the areas accessed by the children are conducted and children benefit from excellent levels of adult supervision and attention. Robust vetting procedures are in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable people, and all children, parents and visitors to the nursery receive a very warm welcome.

The management team strive to improve practice, consistently monitoring and evaluating the quality and standards at the nursery. Regular staff meetings provide valuable opportunities for practitioners to share good practice and to identify their training needs, which are prioritised by the management team. A positive equality and diversity policy outlines a commitment to promoting inclusive practice at the nursery, ensuring all children can achieve as well as they can, regardless of their background. The management team demonstrate a commitment to working with external agencies to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with additional and specific needs.

A comprehensive and detailed range of operational policies and procedures are in place and are regularly reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose; all parents receive a copy of these. Excellent strategies are in place to work with parents. These include parents working at the setting, contributing to children's learning and development records and parents' evenings. Children also regularly take 'Tumbles the Tiger' home and document to his adventures at the weekend. Parents expressed very positive comments about the nursery and staff, and felt they were well-informed about their child's progress. Great efforts have been made to work with all agencies involved in the children's care and welfare. Positive partnerships are in place with local schools, and other early years providers, to enable every child to fully benefit from their time at the setting and have the best start for their future.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are happy and confident and enjoy their time in this setting. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how to promote children's learning and development. Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure that children are protected and well supported. Staff are well deployed to enhance children's learning and welfare and they are skilled at promoting positive attitudes to learning. Detailed planning and organisation ensure children are challenged by the learning experiences provided. Activities are well planned, based upon accurate observations. An effective key person system ensures children's individual needs are met. Staff clearly know the children, however, it not always clear to see how children's next steps are highlighted. Staff use lots of praise to let children know they are valued, and are models of good behaviour, which means children readily respond to gentle reminders about behaving well.

Children's language and literacy skills are developing well. Staff spend time with the children in groups and on an individual basis, encouraging them to converse. This includes lots of eye contact with babies and responding to their babbling and gurgling sounds. They show a genuine interest in conversations initiated by the children. For example, they listen intently when children share items they have brought from home at 'show and tell' time. Staff then ask them questions to extend their thinking, for example, encouraging children to investigate how the torch light works. Consequently, children are learning to become good communicators and feel valued. Opportunities to develop skills in problem solving and numbering are good. Children thoroughly enjoy playing on computer programmes. Children explore and investigate concepts of floating and sinking in the water, discussing which item is heavy or light. Children regularly self-select and staff allow the children to lead their own learning. They explore and investigate the outdoor area with a range of tools, for example, using magnifying tools to search for mini beasts and using the microscope to observe small creatures. The print rich environment exposes children to many examples of writing, numerals and shapes, along with opportunities to recognise their names. Children make very good use of books and writing materials and they listen attentively while stories are told to them. They thoroughly enjoy singing and music. Children count well, recognise colours and shapes and can distinguish size and quantity. For example, they count the number of sweets they have made for their Father's Day present. They show a natural curiosity to problem solving and are able to clearly demonstrate their thought process. Further activities such as dressing up, role play and stories consolidate children's growing knowledge about different cultures, costumes, food, ways of life and the different jobs that people do. Children also take part in fund raising activities for 'Children in Need' and contribute to sponsorship to help support a child in Zimbabwe.

Children's understanding about developing a healthy lifestyle is promoted because they are cared for in clean, well-maintained premises, and they follow effective personal hygiene practices to prevent the risk of infection. They all wash their hands regularly, enjoy a variety of healthy snacks and meals, and grow a range of

vegetables in the outdoor area. Fresh drinking water is available to children throughout the day, but is not as easily accessible for children aged two to three years. Children with particular dietary needs receive good support to ensure these are met. Most staff are all trained in first aid and take suitable steps to care for sick children and manage minor accidents appropriately. Children learn about safety because safety measures are effective and resources are age-appropriate and in good condition. Children contribute to the care and safety of their resources by helping to tidy away at the end of play. Their understanding of safety is further developed by participating in regular fire drills. Children are developing a sense of personal responsibility. They are acquiring skills that promote healthy habits and develop their understanding and eagerness to become independent capable learners. Children have opportunities to develop their physical skills as they access the outdoor environment on a daily basis, using a variety of outdoor play equipment. However, opportunities for children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant are less well planned.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met