

Ravenscar Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	317397
Inspection date	03/12/2008
Inspector	Carys Millican
Setting address	8 Eden Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 9LR
Telephone number	01228 530520
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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.

Description of the setting

Ravenscar Kindergarten is privately owned. It was first registered in 1988 and is located in the Stanwix suburb of Carlisle, approximately two miles north of the city centre. Children are accommodated within a two storey building adjoining the owner's private residence. A maximum of 41 children from six months to eight years may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open from 08.30 to 17.30 on weekdays. There is an enclosed rear garden and a covered play area which is used as an outside classroom. The nursery pets include one rabbit, seven love birds, and six cats. The upper rooms are accessed by stairs and there is one step to the front door.

There are currently 67 early years children on roll, of these, 25 children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves the immediate and extended areas since many parents commute to the city for work, and the children move on to several feeder primary schools. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 10 staff who hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager is the Lead Practitioner in Early Years for the Carlisle area, responsible for continuous provision and the outdoor environment. Ravenscar Kindergarten is a Member of the National Day Nurseries Association and Early Education. The kindergarten is registered on the Early Years Register, the compulsory part of the Childcare Register and the voluntary part of the Childcare Register.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Ravenscar Kindergarten provides children with highly effective learning experiences that recognise their individual uniqueness and provides an interesting and stimulating environment that both motivates and encourages children's learning. Children make excellent progress in all areas of their development and learning through the exceptional and diverse selection of activities and free play experiences on offer. Children are kept safe and secure in the efficiently well organised and effectively well presented environment. They benefit immensely through the close partnership embraced and actively encouraged with parents and other professionals that enables them to contribute their thoughts and ideas to further enhance children's learning experiences and development. The manager and staff fully embrace change and are proactive in finding new and innovative ways to further improve the outcomes for children through continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- further develop the system for the self-evaluation of procedures, practices and continuous improvement.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The manager and staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance and implement it effectively in their everyday practice. The special relationship between the manager and staff enthuses equality and inclusion that ensures that all members actively contribute to the consistently high standards within the setting. Effective recruitment systems ensure that well trained, experienced and highly skilled practitioners work daily with the children who provide an outstanding environment that significantly enhances children's learning experiences. The manager and staff consistently consider research in child development and learning and use the knowledge gained from this to further strengthen all aspects of their child-centred provision. This excellent setting is highlighted as a 'flagship' provision for early years practitioners to visit from other settings.

Children are kept safe, secure and fully safeguarded through the staff's excellent understanding of the setting's policies and procedures which are implemented in everyday practice and accessible for parents. Staff have an excellent understanding of their role and responsibility for safeguarding children and safeguarding procedures. This is further enhanced by the practice for reviewing documents, records and procedures, and the sharing of information with parents and other professionals pertaining to the children and the provision. A file of highly effective and detailed risk assessments are rigorously maintained for all areas used by children both indoors and outside, and for children's outings. These are continuously updated to ensure children's continued safety. Staff support children's learning exceptionally well. They understand the importance of skilfully guiding, challenging, reinforcing and building on children's interests to enable them to learn and develop. The extensively resourced, language-rich, free play areas throughout the kindergarten and skilled organisation of resources enables children to grow in confidence and independence, as well as supporting and empowering them to make their own choices and decisions.

The manager and staff develop strong relationships with parents and carers. They understand the importance of working together and encouraging parents to become involved in their child's learning. A wealth of information is available for parents, including a detailed prospectus, newsletters and care sheets. Staff obtain information from parents in order to gain a greater insight into children's individual needs and how best to support the children and enable them to reach their full potential. Staff and parents work together with other professionals to ensure that this takes place where concerns in their child's development are identified. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning as detailed information is sent home and displayed about the experiences for the term and how parents can help in certain events.

The manager and staff are all extremely highly motivated and have exceptionally high aspirations for quality of care and learning they provide. This is evident through ongoing improvement and development within the setting. They have developed an outdoor classroom which enables children to spend time outside in the fresh air as well as providing a stimulating learning environment that is continuously accessible to them. Staff meet regularly to discuss and self-evaluate the running of the setting. They reflect on their practice and discuss future developments to further enhance the experiences for children. The self-evaluation system has not been activated on line.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Experienced competent staff provide the best possible challenge in this language-rich learning environment, enabling children to make excellent progress in all areas of their learning and development. Children gain independence, feel safe and grow in confidence as they are empowered to make their own decisions, experiment and take appropriate risks knowing that staff are always on hand to support them. Children set the snack table and one by one confidently pour their own juice knowing that any spillages they can easily wipe up. Staff listen to and value what children say. They build on these comments to plan exciting individual learning experiences for each child. Staff are skilled at using the knowledge they have of individual children to provide a rich, varied and imaginative environment with space for children to be themselves either joining in with others, playing by themselves or sitting alone. They provide opportunities for children to learn through repeating patterns of play and promote heuristic play following detailed research of schematic learning patterns. Staff 'tune into' children's interests, therefore children are highly motivated and feel valued.

Staff provide an exceptional variety of learning materials and high quality resources with visual stimuli in every room. Children explore and investigate new resources and really enjoy their time at the setting. They carefully handle the colourful baubles as they hang them on their home-made tree. Children confidently help themselves to them as they enjoy the process of re-arranging the decorations time and time again. They enjoy investigating the numerous baskets of resources set at low level. Children enjoy looking at the colourful wooden decorations and at the extensive selection of children's books. They play with Russian dolls sequencing them in size and counting them. Children help themselves to the many sets of ear phones and concentrate as they unravel the lead before plugging them in to listen to a tape. They competently use information, communication and technology equipment which is available in all rooms. Children learn through sensory experiences; they hunt for artefacts in shredded paper or pretend snow. Numerous creative experiences allow children to individualise their own end product by choosing the materials they want to use. Communication skills are exceptionally well promoted both in the environment but also by staff who use lots of eye contact and constantly interact with the children. All areas of learning are exceptionally well covered through a balance of free play and adult-directed activities.

Information about children's individual needs, ability and capabilities are collated

from observations, assessment and information from parents or previous records. These inform the future planning so the learning intentions for individual children are meticulously considered enabling them to consolidate what they already know as well as providing challenge to move them onto the next steps in their learning. Children's colourful progress records and 'learning journey' booklets are clearly maintained by the children's key person. Staff are highly skilled at adapting activities to provide each child with the interest that encourages them to take part. A strong partnership exists with parents and continues throughout the time the child attends the setting. Discussions regarding children's progress are firmly established and where needed, strategic planning to support certain areas is sought by the manager. The setting works exceedingly well with other professionals to ensure that individual learning plans are in place for children and that all the necessary support is made available to them. The manager works closely with local schools to make the transition as exciting and easy as possible for children and parents.

Children are very well behaved. They begin to learn to resolve issues and negotiate as staff watch before intervening. Consequently, children are very confident, well adjusted and learn the skills they will use in later life. Children enjoy outdoor activities in the 'outdoor classroom' and in the outer play area. They enjoy ball games and physical play on the climbing frames. Children experience many outdoor activities where they explore the environment around them and the community they live in. Children learn about difference and diversity through books, resources, displays, discussion and experiences thus enabling them to develop an understanding and respect.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe through detailed discussion and the positive role model created by staff. They take part in events, such as road safety week and regular fire evacuation practices. Children gain an understanding of the importance of healthy living by spending time in the fresh air as well as eating healthy foods. They exercise daily outside and self-select three healthy food options each snack time. Staff use ice packs in packed lunches to ensure perishables remain safe for eating at mealtimes. Staff also use probes when heating food and a separate fridge is available in the baby room. Personal hygiene with regard to hand washing and cleanliness is exemplary. Staff follow stringent hygiene practices when changing children and meticulously wipe down play areas before snack and lunchtime.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration or the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.