

# Northern College Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspector** Karen Cockings

**Setting address** Wentworth Castle, Stainborough, Barnsley, South  
Yorkshire, S75 3ET  
**Telephone number** 01226 776011  
**Email** [lpowell@northern.ac.uk](mailto:lpowell@northern.ac.uk)  
**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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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

The Northern College Children's Centre opened in 1978. It is managed by the college's governing body and is situated on the Northern College campus within the grounds of Wentworth Castle at Stainborough, near Barnsley and Sheffield. The centre is housed in a single storey pre-fabricated building. It primarily serves students attending the Northern College, with a number of places for children living in the surrounding rural communities. There are five rooms available for children's play and a fully enclosed garden area.

The setting is registered for a maximum of 40 children under eight years old at any one time. There are currently 11 children in the early years age range on roll, with a number in receipt of nursery education funding. The setting also supports children with special education needs and/or learning difficulties, and children with English as an additional language. There is also provision for occasional out of school care for children aged from five to 14 years old. This part of the provision is registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The centre is open between 9.15am and 5.30pm Mondays to Saturdays, and on Sunday between 9.15am and 12.30pm. It does not operate on Bank Holidays and for two weeks during August.

There are 10 staff who work directly with the children, all of whom have relevant early years qualifications. The setting has successfully participated in the National Day Nursery Association quality assurance scheme, Quality Counts, and receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children benefit from a warm and welcoming environment, where staff support them well in their learning and development. They liaise closely with parents to meet children's individual needs, although partnerships with other settings are more difficult to establish due to the nature of the provision. Most required records, policies and procedures are maintained well, supporting children's safety and well-being, but there is a lack of necessary detail in some areas. Staff work hard to create a stimulating and inclusive environment. There is a firm commitment to the continuous improvement of the setting, demonstrated through the use of self-evaluation and quality assurance schemes.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review and update policies and procedures, with particular regard to ensuring that complaints procedures reflect current regulations and include accurate information about how to contact Ofsted

- develop clearer record keeping systems with regard to recruitment and vetting procedures
- explore further ways of building partnerships ,where possible, with other settings involved in children's care.

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

Children's safety, health and well-being are promoted effectively within the setting. Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection, which helps to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded. They have recently completed training to update their knowledge in this area, and new procedures are being developed to take into account forthcoming changes in vetting systems. However, some aspects of record keeping are not at present clearly shared with the manager of the setting, to evidence that required checks have been completed. From a broader safety perspective, staff are vigilant in their supervision of children and effective measures are taken to maintain a secure environment for children. Risk assessments and daily checking systems, together with the review of accident records, help to identify any hazards so that remedial action can be taken. Required records, policies and procedures are maintained well overall, although some procedures do not fully reflect current regulations or provide accurate details about the role of the regulator. For example, the complaints procedure does not include up-to-date information for parents about how they can contact Ofsted if they feel that their concerns have not been satisfactorily resolved.

Staff work hard to create a stimulating environment for children, where they can easily access a good variety of toys and play materials to support their learning. For example, there are interesting, well resourced areas for creative play, and attractive displays, which include examples of children's work. Staff make good use of tracking and observation systems to evaluate how play areas are used, and to identify where more input may be needed. Resources, such as, photographic displays, welcome posters, books and small world figures, reflect positive images of different cultures and needs, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for families. Where additional needs are identified, staff work closely with parents and with other professionals as necessary, to support children's learning and development.

The setting builds positive partnerships with parents, recognising that they know their children best. Staff gather as much information as they can from parents before children are placed, and there is good ongoing communication with them about daily events and children's progress. For example, each child has a daily diary in which staff record significant information, both about practical routines and also about the activities children have been enjoying. In addition to ongoing verbal communication, there are opportunities every term for parents to meet with their child's key person, when children's development records are shared with them. Staff appreciate that most of the parents are using the childcare provision to enable them to pursue their own learning programme, but there are books and resource boxes available for parents to borrow and use with their children in the

evenings if they wish. Children tend to spend only a relatively short time at the setting, while their parents are training, and go on to attend a wide range of schools and nurseries, often in different parts of the country. It is therefore difficult for staff to build partnerships with these other provisions, although parents are given transition documents to pass on to them. In some instances, however, there is shared care with other local pre-schools and partnerships with these settings are not yet developed to their full potential, in order to promote continuity of children's care and learning.

Recommendations from the last inspection have been suitably addressed overall, particularly in relation to the involvement of parents. The setting demonstrates a clear commitment to continuous improvement, through its successful participation in quality assurance schemes and ongoing action plans arising from parents' forums and college committee meetings. The staff team includes experienced, caring practitioners, who work well together, reflect upon their practice and are committed to their own professional development.

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

Children enjoy the time they spend in the nursery and settle in quite quickly. Staff tune in well to the interests of new children, which helps in guiding them to activities that will be appealing and relieves feelings of distress when they first leave their parent. A pictorial 'timetable train' is also helpful as a way of explaining the sequence of the day's events to children who may have communication difficulties. Children soon become familiar with daily routines, such as, finding their names on the board and getting ready to go outside to play. They learn to play cooperatively together and develop a sense of responsibility, as they help to tidy toys away and collect the plates up after snack. Staff warmly acknowledge their achievements, thanking them for their help and praising them for managing to complete a task all by themselves. An attractive photographic display reinforces the nursery's 'golden rules', showing how children are kind and helpful towards others.

Staff plan and provide a well balanced range of activities, both indoors and outside the nursery. Children quickly choose where they would like to play and the atmosphere is busy and purposeful. Older children use language well as they take part in role play activities, such as visiting the bakery; they tell each other they need to buy the items first before they can put them in the microwave, and they call out greetings to each other as they go off shopping. Some confidently explain to others how to draw a flower. They practise writing for a purpose as they make menus and shopping lists. Younger children love songs and rhymes, joining in enthusiastically with their favourites and performing the relevant actions. Staff talk and interact with them as they play so that they learn how to communicate with each other, echoing phrases they have heard, such as 'all share'. Children develop numeracy and counting skills as part of their play and during daily routines. For example, they count the number of raisins they have left on their plate and how many kisses they have drawn on a picture they are making. They carefully cut out and name different shapes and thoroughly enjoy pouring water between different

sized containers. Children explore their creativity and design skills while making models from old boxes, or making pictures on the computer to print off for display. Their knowledge and understanding of the world grows as they find mini-beasts in the garden and go out for walks in the surrounding parkland.

Staff have a good understanding of how children learn through their play. They conduct sensitive observations of children, which help them to identify children's interests and abilities, building on the information they have gathered from parents. Each child has their own 'learning journey' folders, which include these observations and examples of children's work as a way of tracking the progress they are making. Staff effectively use what they observe about children to plan for the next steps in their learning.

The setting takes positive steps to promote children's good health and to raise their awareness of safety issues. Nourishing meals and snacks are provided for children as part of a well balanced menu, which includes plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Main meals are prepared in the college kitchens and brought over to the nursery. Children sit sociably together, talking with staff about their favourite foods and learning about foods that are good for them. They have helped to make displays about '5 a day' and about healthy eating. Their good health is further promoted through regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They thoroughly enjoy the time they spend in the garden, developing physical skills and confidence as they climb, balance and steer wheeled toys between obstacles. There is a separate, smaller enclosed area for the younger children where they can play safely on seesaws and other equipment, suitable for their age group. Children also take part in exercises and learn how this affects their bodies. Their understanding of how to keep themselves safe is nurtured, as they take part in fire drills and learn to take care as they use equipment. For example, staff remind them to sit at the table when they are using scissors and to roll balls to each other indoors rather than to throw them. They become increasingly independent as they learn easy ways to put on their coats and to fasten buttons and zips. There is a happy atmosphere in the nursery, which is conducive to children's learning.

## 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

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

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	2
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