

## Summary of e-Quality Counts Assessment

Name of Setting	Care4kids			
e-QC Number	eQC10138			
Address	Agnes Street Blackburn BB2 2NR			
Date of Assessment:	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2013			
	Level Achieved for Each Section			
e-Quality Counts Section	Not met	Level One	Level Two	Level Three
1: Management				✓
2: Staff				✓
3: Observation & Reflection to Inform Practice			✓	
4: Care, Learning & Development				✓
5: Environment				✓
6: Visits & Visitors				✓
7: Equality & Inclusion				✓
8: Safeguarding Children				✓
9: Partnerships with Parents/Carers				✓
10: Nutrition, Serving Food & Oral Health				✓
11: Health & Safety				✓
12: Babies				✓
13: School Escort Service				✓
14: Out of School Care				✓
15: Students				✓
Overall e-Quality Counts Level Achieved	Level 3			
Date	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2013			

### KEY

Level Achieved	Accreditation Status
Level 1	Indicates a setting achieving a level of quality above the national standards
Level 2	Indicates a setting achieving a high level of quality
Level 3 (Highest)	Indicates a setting achieving exemplary practice

## **Assessment Feedback**

Assessor's comments to include areas of strength and areas to be developed within each section

### **AWARD e-QUALITY COUNTS AT LEVEL 3**

#### Section 1 – Management

There is a very strong and effective system of management at the setting with managers displaying a clearly distinguished role in determining the professional staff culture and a successful and sustainable future for the setting. Managers are competent in identifying improved systems to be implemented into the setting and consistently look for ways in which systems can be measured and improved. The setting leaders are pro-active in participating with other agencies to develop and enhance multi-agency working. They have integrated themselves into the early year's community by hosting EYP Network meetings at the nursery and are representatives on the management board of their local Childcare Centre. Local authority professionals speak of the value and significance of the involvement of Care4Kids as pro-active, professional and dedicated childcare providers to families in Blackburn. Regular management team meetings take place and the focus is on exploring ways to improve practice, engage in a positive staff team and further meet the needs of the children and families. Issues discussed at these meetings are communicated to other staff members who are trusted and empowered to be active participants in the quality improvement cycle. Parents are also invited to be involved in decision making and managers employ a numbers of ways to evaluate provision and identify whether it is fulfilling the needs and expectations of parents.

There are policies and procedures for purchasing and maintaining goods, equipment and services, which clearly reflects their commitment to quality. There is a rolling programme of refurbishment and improvement to buildings and equipment and the Managers clearly have a devotion to constantly investing in the nursery.

#### Section 2 – Staff

There is a very strong, diligent and loyal team of practitioners employed at Care4Kids with a robust ethos of continuous professional development for the benefit of the children and to improve the confidence of staff. Staff are included and involved in establishing and fulfilling the philosophy of the organisation as a supportive learning environment for all and as such, practitioners have an ownership and appreciation for their role in the success of the nursery. Staff performance is monitored through supervision and appraisal and practitioners and their room leaders establish objectives for improvement and development. Leaders coach staff and due to the high level of qualifications held by the team, there is always someone available to mentor practitioners who may be unsure of a particular subject. In saying this, though, of the nineteen practitioners employed at the nursery there are ten practitioners who have either achieved a degree or who are in the process of doing so, which clearly shows a solid culture of appreciation for commitment to education and advancement and the effect of the positive role models in the leadership team.

There are arrangements for effective means of communication within the nursery including regular room meetings, whole staff meetings and senior staff meetings. The set agenda for staff meetings clearly shows how leaders value the thoughts and opinions of practitioners and aim to engage them in establishing the strategic direction of the service and becoming involved in the quality improvement cycle. This culture of collaboration and respect is reflected in the relatively low staff turnover. There is an emphasis on supporting co-operative team working and practitioners are provided with whole team training to encourage friendship groups to form. All staff have contributed to the "Staff Charter" which is a list of responsibilities embedded in the ethos of respect for children, families and colleagues, and this is displayed as a reminder in each room. Annual anti bullying training for all staff serves

to underwrite a culture of empathy and understanding.

### Section 3 – Observation & Reflection to Inform Practice

The setting clearly believes in the value of engaging in reflective practice to improve provision. Regular observations are undertaken to inform practitioners of the key areas of improvement and contribute to development plans.

The team have been supported by their Teaching Advisor in implementing The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) and The Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ITERS-R). These provide a framework for assessing the quality of the setting environment, routines, procedures and interactions using observations which then inform the settings action plan for improvement and helps managers to identify when positive improvements have been made.

### Section 4 – Care, Learning & Development

Practitioners exhibit an awareness and understanding of child development and the interests of the children in their key group. They are able to demonstrate an appreciation of the diverse ways in which children think and learn and plan to meet these needs through individual short term plans, adult led activities or enhancements to continuous provision.

Practitioners are kind and caring and have created a positive bond with their key children and their families. The key person works with parents to gather information about their child to fully meet the needs and establish activities and routines which support development and well-being.

Practitioners have established positive relationships with children and parents and show respect and appreciation for the individual characteristics and background of each child in the setting. During circle time, children are encouraged to identify their name written on a piece of paper and place it on a poster portraying the emotion they are feeling. Children are asked how they are feeling and why and generally answer with confidence.

Practitioners examine, review and improve their practice in relation to inclusion, equality and anti-discriminatory practice to ensure individual needs are met. Children's learning journeys include a wealth of observations and monthly summaries of how the children are developing. Children's confidence is encouraged and activities to harness independence and self-esteem are planned. Children confidently and competently use a SMART board in the pre-school and are able to find their favourite games and songs, with older children supporting younger children who maybe unsure.

There is access to a wonderful outdoor play area which is used as an extension to the settings provision which has recently been re-designed to provide a range of opportunities for development through all areas of learning. Children benefit from being taken outside for short periods of time in all weathers every day, and for most of the day, when the weather permits.

Children are encouraged to initiate their own games through a wealth of continuous provision opportunities and enhancements and are encouraged to make their own decisions. Children's freedom is valued and they are permitted time and space to explore, think, focus and consolidate learning experiences.

Children's behaviour is positive and supportive. Older children are provided with a 'Traffic Light' behaviour management system which is shared with parents for consistency; however, children are very aware of what is right and wrong and the impact of their actions on others. Home link activities such as a "Vet box" encourage children to take responsibility and share their learning at home. Parents are also involved deeply in activities at the setting such as Mini Olympics in which parents joined in and contributed ideas and items such as gold medal cookies.

A great commitment has been made by the setting to support children's communication and language skills. The setting manager and EYP has attended training in the Robinson screen of understanding and supports practitioners in gaining an understanding of where children are with regards to thinking, listening and relating. The setting has established listening centres for children and a number of indoor and outdoor story, speaking and listening areas

to provide children with time and space away from the hustle and bustle of the busy play rooms.

### Section 5 – Environment

The nursery is set in a beautiful period property built in 1830 with very large bright open rooms with substantial windows flooding the rooms with light and fresh air. The premises are safe and secure and maintained to an extremely high standard. There is clearly a lot of continuous investment in updating the nursery and it is clear that staff take pride in their working environment as the nursery is constantly kept clean and tidy. The setting is furnished throughout with good quality equipment and resources and there is even some bespoke furniture made to an exceptional standard to meet the specific needs of the children in the setting.

The entrance and reception area is welcoming to children and families and there is always a senior member of staff available there to greet parents and visitors. Information is displayed in this area for parents and there is the opportunity to have a discussion with staff before going into the room to collect a child, which is clearly valuable to parents.

Separate areas are provided for a range of different play opportunities including separate sleep rooms and a craft room. Room layout is planned to maintain an open and bright feel to room, whilst still providing a wealth of play opportunities.

The outdoor play space at the setting provides opportunity, not only for physical exercise, but for a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities to imaginative play, music, construction, gardening, scientific and environmental discovery, and quiet play, such as story time, sand and water. There is also an area for basketball and football and a two story log cabin. The children are scheduled time daily to play outside and explore the various areas with confidence and independence.

### Section 6 – Visits & Visitors

Children of all ages in the setting have the opportunity to go out of the setting on exciting and interesting outings in small and large groups, such as trips to the park, shops and zoo.

Outings form part of the curriculum planning to complement, develop and broaden activities.

The setting policies promote outings and visitors to extend children's experiences and ensure that these are planned extensively to ensure appropriate health and safety provisions are in place. Outings are carefully planned to ensure they will be relevant for the age and stage of development of the children attending and staff and practitioners use personal knowledge or pre-outings visits to inform the risk assessment. Children's responses of outings are evaluated to inform future planning and in the case of older children, they evaluate their own experiences and provide feedback for next steps and upcoming outings.

Parental permission is sought for all occasions when children leave the building and grounds and parents are also invited to come along too. Outings are interesting and relevant, for example visiting a local Mexican restaurant and taking part in making tacos.

Visitors are also invited into the setting to enhance the curriculum and again it is clear that practitioners have a good knowledge and understanding of the ways in which they can make such visits interesting and relevant whilst maintaining the health and safety of the children.

### Section 7 – Equality & Inclusion

There is a designated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator who has a good understanding of her role and responsibilities in supporting staff and parents in ensuring children's needs are met.

The clear inclusion and equality policy states how individual needs will be met and the setting has established a framework for observing children to inform planned activities and liaising with a wealth of external professionals such as the teacher team, who are available to offer advice and support.

All staff have relevant skills in early years and access to an abundance of training and specific qualifications in aspects of SEN in order that specialist individual needs can be met.

A relatively large number of practitioners have either already, or are in the process of,

undertaking a degree in Childcare and Inclusion and the setting leaders are clearly devoted to providing continuous professional development.

Records and reviews are created and shared with parents and other agencies that become involved in supporting the family. Transitions are managed in a way that supports the child and family and ensures continuity of care and information.

#### Section 8 – Safeguarding Children

The setting has prepared a very full and comprehensive Safeguarding handbook for all staff, to be used upon induction. This informs practitioners of their role and responsibility in safeguarding children and reporting any allegations, disclosures and areas for concern. In addition to the handbook, the safeguarding policy is reviewed regularly by practitioners who are able to take ownership in the implementation and sharing of guidelines, and have a good understanding of the rights of children and their families.

Leaders ensure there are systems in place to support and protect vulnerability of all adults working with children and there is a managing allegations and whistleblowing policy in place which is known and understood by practitioners.

#### Section 9 – Partnerships with Parents/Carers

All contact with parents and carers, be it prior to admission, or subsequently is extremely professional and welcoming. The setting has a very useful, informative and explanatory website which parents use alongside regular newsletters for the whole nursery and weekly room newsletters to keep abreast of the many exciting and interesting activities at nursery. Such endeavours ensure that parents are constantly kept up-to-date with everything that is going on at the nursery and encouraged to contribute ideas, thoughts and opinions, and therefore included in their child's care and education. A parent's forum also allows parents the opportunity to be involved in shaping the strategic direction of the nursery through policy reviews and mutual information exchanges. Regular parent's evenings are held and parents are provided with written information on ways in which they can engage in topics through activities at home. Coffee mornings allow parents to make bonds with other parents and chat informally to practitioners about their children. Older children are involved in a home reading scheme, and throughout there is evidence of the diverse ways in which parents contribute to the nursery, from bringing in a calendar to display in the role play Chinese restaurant to participating in the setting mini Olympic races. Such inclusive collaboration has established a very homely and welcoming atmosphere at the nursery where parents and practitioners work together to meet the needs of the children. On the rare occasions where a parent has suggested ways to improve, the practitioners have immediately embraced and accepted the feedback and made changes to practice.

Overall, the setting has made extensive efforts to ensure that parents are able to participate in and contribute to their child's experience of nursery.

#### Section 10 – Nutrition, Serving Food & Oral Health

Meals and snacks are provided which are healthy, nutritious and appealing to children. Snack times are a social occasion with practitioners encouraging children to talk about the food they are eating and food which they enjoy. Adults provide support when needed and encourage independence by allowing children to serve the food themselves with feeding equipment appropriate to the age and stage of development.

The nursery chef is qualified and skilled to plan and provide nutritious meals and has a genuine enthusiasm for his role in promoting good eating habits, which will benefit the children throughout their lives. Stringent food hygiene procedures are followed and the setting kitchen was awarded five stars by the area Environmental Health team.

All children are encouraged to take part in brushing their teeth and activities which promote dental health, whilst water is available in all rooms at all times.

### Section 11 – Health & Safety

The organisation for health and safety is of a particularly high standard with managers creating a culture of responsibility for minimising risk and maintaining a clean and safe environment. Organisation for health and safety is thorough and distinct and identifies possible issues and action to be taken. Checklists are used to provide a benchmark of standards of hygiene, which are clearly exceeded consistently as is the setting systems for maintenance. Very good quality resources are purchased from reputable companies or made specifically for the setting to an exceptional standard and all equipment used is safe for the purpose it is used.

Substances hazardous to health are stored securely and used according to the instructions and by trained personnel only.

Fire safety is promoted throughout with staff training and regular safety checks and the setting operates a strict no smoking policy. The setting has established partnerships for maintaining a service should the building become inoperable.

Staff attendance is managed through policies which serve to protect staff from illness and support early recovery from sickness, managed then through back to work interviews which ensure the setting works in partnership with employees to provide a supportive working environment.

The setting has an excellent and effective waste management policy and has implemented a meticulous framework for energy efficiency and social responsibility.

### Section 12 – Babies

The areas for children under the age of two are bright and open plan, enabling babies to crawl around and explore different areas whilst adults support their learning.

Caring, positive and approachable practitioners are employed at the setting and those working in the baby rooms are knowledgeable and skilled in establishing a very welcoming and pleasant atmosphere. Practitioners are competent in planning play opportunities for babies and have a sincere appreciation and bond with the children in their care. Babies are provided with a good quality standard of care as key practitioners clearly have an attachment with the babies in their key group

The environment and practices are planned to provide babies with a sense of security and familiarity and to accommodate home routines. Practitioners have maintained positive mutual communication with parents to further understand the needs and interests of the child and information from parents is used to inform the routines of the babies and aid transition into the nursery. Parents are provided with a lot of information and advice from practitioners to support their use of the nursery and help with home routines. Transitions are managed with planned inductions, time for sibling visits and a buddy system for older children caring for younger children when they first move into a room.

Babies receive a wide variety of experiences such as treasure baskets, malleable materials, heuristic play, water play, painting, sand and small world play throughout the day in a safe and stimulating environment.

### Section 13 – School Escort Service

The setting offers a collection and after school service to schools in the local community. A partnership is established with the schools and good relationships have been created.

Furthermore, the setting asks schools to meet with them to evaluate the service they offer. Risk assessments are undertaken and procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the children and staff when travelling from school to after school club. There is a safe procedure for collection and dropping off and these too are reviewed regularly by staff and children, who often contribute to the setting risk assessments.

There are written procedures for vehicle maintenance and use and practitioners are mindful at all times of the importance of their role.

### Section 14 – Out of School Care

The person in charge of the after school club is skilled and experienced in providing a high

quality experience for children attending the club. Planning is undertaken to ensure activities are relevant and provide exciting, stimulating experiences for the children and young people. Policies are thorough and serve to inform the ethos of the club of professional childcare in line with the philosophy of the Care4Kids organisation.

Children and young people are welcomed into the club which has a particularly friendly and warm atmosphere. The induction process for new children and young people is clearly successful, as all children arrive self-assured and assertive and settle quickly into the activities they have planned previously.

Children and young people are independent with established friendship groups where they display autonomy and confidence, which shows that they feel safe and secure in their environment.

Comprehensive planning reflects children's interests and needs and is not only based on observations, but mainly consist of the variety of ways that practitioners ensure they listen to and respond to children's conversations. Activities include Roller Skating and visits to Eureka as well as playing pool and having craft activities. Children write and draw in scrap books, comments books and put notes in the suggestion box, they also evaluate any activities and outings to inform future planning. It is clear that the voices of children play a central role to everything that the club is and does.

Children's behaviour is positive and the group have established a clear framework for appropriate behaviour including a list of which behaviours will be rewarded by points for their team and which will result in losing points. Positive behaviours include things such as contributing ideas and being helpful and kind and children are supported and encouraged in meeting their own targets.

#### Section 15 – Students

Work placements are provided for students embarking on a career in early years and a comprehensive policy outlines the role of the manager in ensuring accommodating students at the setting is mutually beneficial and does not compromise the staff to child ratios.

Students are supported in becoming involved in the daily routine of the nursery and clearly value the opportunity to be included in provision of good quality.