

# Parents able to keep a virtual eye on children

BY JON COLMAN

A WHITEHAVEN nursery has installed a webcam system to allow parents to keep a virtual eye on their children.

Tamalder Childcare, on Meadow Road, is one of the first nurseries in Cumbria to have the £4,000 system installed.

Owners Steve and Donna Duff set up the cameras to let anxious parents check up on their children via a website.

They decided to install them after a similar system proved a success at their other nursery, in Barrow.

Steve, 39, said: "It's a bit of reassurance for parents - they can log on at work, for example, and see how their child is getting on. And it is free."

Steve said he opted to set up the cameras after watching the recent TV documentary *Nurseries Under Cover*, which exposed the poor running of some British nurseries.

"It is part of our open door policy and proves we have nothing to hide," he said. "If parents want to look around, they can come in at any time and see the nursery as it always is."

Steve carried out a survey at his Barrow nursery which showed that nearly 100 per cent of parents were



■ EYE, EYE: One of the webcams

keen on the secure NurseryCam system - which, he says, could not be safer.

To access the webcams, parents must fill in an online questionnaire and get a password. The nursery will double check all the details, which will be logged with the central NurseryCam server, before authorising access.

Unless you are authorised to view the images, everything on the website is encrypted.

"It's the most secure system possible," Steve said.

"The encryption on the images is military standard. This is our highest priority.

"Parents at our Barrow nursery were very reassured once this was

explained to them.

"Any fears they had about security were dealt with by this information."

Six cameras in total have been set up in the nursery, although parents will only be able to view the one in the room their child is in at the time.

None of the cameras will be accessible outside the nursery's opening hours, and Tamalder will be able to restrict the length of time they can be viewed.

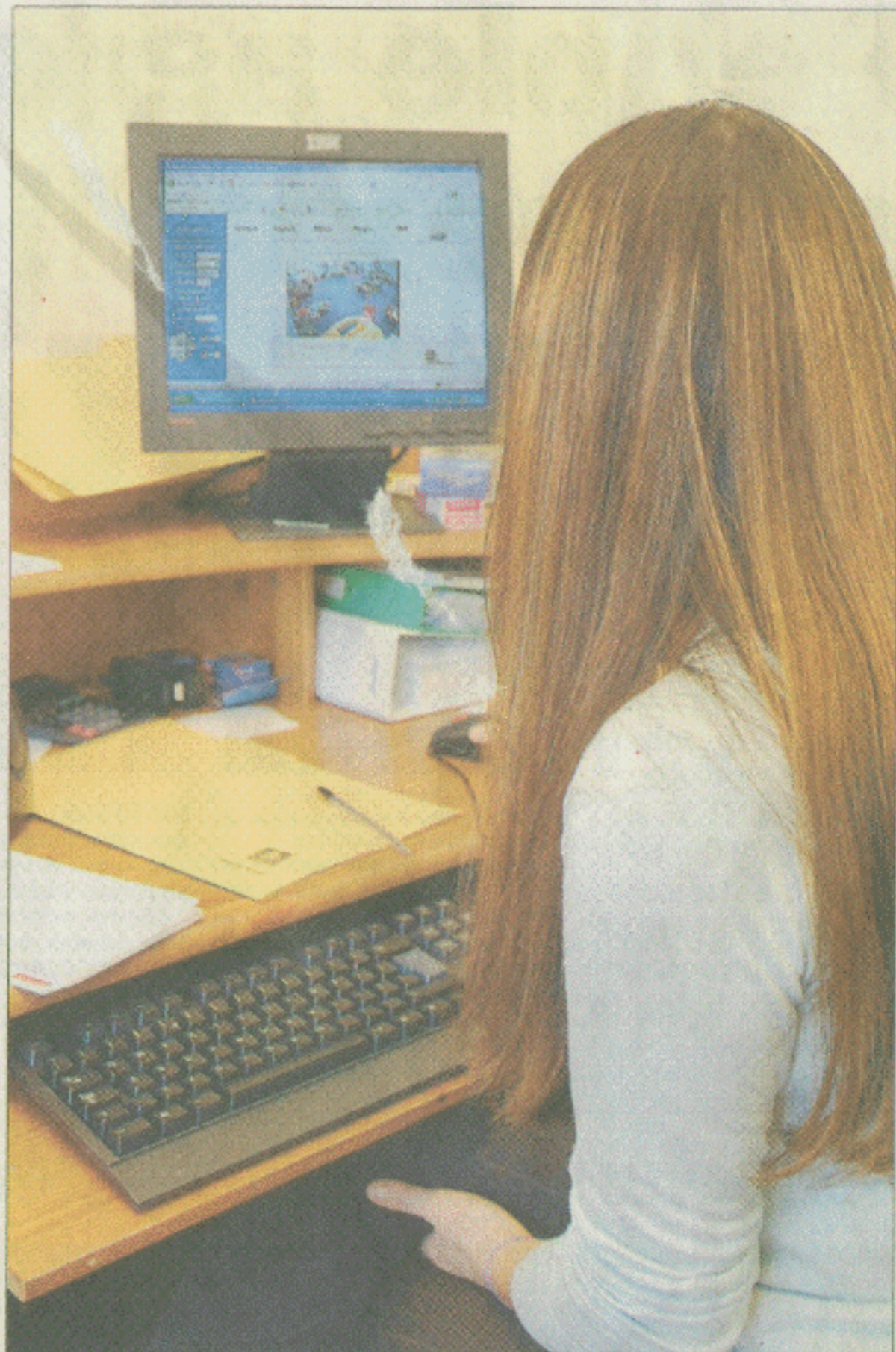
"We can also detect if someone is logging on from a machine different from the one they usually use, and can check to make sure it is them," Steve added.

Steve, who hails from Barrow, said the nursery's staff are happy with the system, and have had three or four enquiries already from parents who want to register with the site.

The nursery, which has been open for about four months, currently looks after 12 children but is able to take up to 85.

NurseryCam is a national firm which provides secure webcam facilities for dozens of nurseries and pre-schools across Britain.

■ For more information call Tamalder Childcare on 01946 690490 or 07739083383.



■ KEEPING TABS: A mother logs on to the nursery webcam to check up on her toddler