



St Nicholas Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY311395

Inspection date 21 March 2006

Inspector Rosalie Mary Turner

Setting Address 83 St Nicholas Road, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR30 1NN

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Registered person Brundall Care

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Full day care, Crèche

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Nicholas Children's Centre is run by Brundall Care. It opened in 1999 but changed ownership in 2005. The centre operates from six rooms in a converted building in the town of Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. The ground floor is devoted to the care of children under 5 years whilst out of school care is provided on the first floor. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The centre is open each weekday from 08.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. The centre serves the local community.

There are currently 102 children under the age of 8 years on roll. Of these 45 children receive funding for nursery education. However, children up to the age of 12 years may attend the out of school care. The centre currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The centre employs 16 staff. All members of staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The centre has Norfolk Quality Kitemark accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and clean environment where the staff place a high emphasis on protecting them from the spread of infection. For example, children are reminded to wash their hands after they use the toilet and before they eat so that they manage their personal hygiene from an early age. Staff also wear disposable gloves every time they change nappies and disinfect the mat after each use. Children's health needs are further promoted because the centre does not allow children to attend if they are suffering from a contagious illness to protect others from cross infection.

Babies thrive as they are able to eat and sleep on demand. Staff are aware that pushchairs could restrict sleeping babies' movements and actively promote good practice by providing cots and individual mattresses so that children enjoy a refreshing nap. However, they respect the wishes of those parents who prefer their babies to sleep in buggies. Older children are learning to meet their own health needs as they can help themselves to a drink whenever they are thirsty. They provided with a well balanced range of nutritious foods such as freshly cooked meats, fish and pasta that help them to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. Children also have worthwhile opportunities to taste a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables at snack times to help them 'to grow up strong and healthy'. However, some options in the out of school club tuck shop may not encourage older children to develop healthy eating habits.

Children are developing a positive attitude to healthy living. They look forward to playing outside because the hard surfaced playground enables them to experience outdoor play in most weathers while babies, who are not yet mobile, are pushed outside in their prams.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are emotionally secure because they are warmly welcomed into a safe, child-centred environment where they are able to gain a sense of belonging. The colourful displays of work in the hallways and playrooms effectively help all children

to come in happily, stay relaxed and feel secure. Furthermore, the comprehensive range of accessible, high quality resources encourage babies to separate from their carers and settle quickly. However, the out of school rooms have yet to be refurbished to ensure that they offer a more comfortable 'home from home' environment where older children can relax after a busy school day.

Children's safety is given high priority and they are closely monitored by staff who are vigilant to protect them from danger. They ensure that toys having small parts are not accessible to babies and encourage older children to keep the floor tidy to avoid possible accidents. Children have a thorough understanding of how to keep themselves safe from a very early age because staff talk to them about possible dangers, such as those from traffic and kitchen knives. They also regularly practise fire drills and are confident in evacuating the centre quickly and safely. All staff assess risks and take immediate action to reduce hazards. For example, they cover all low-level electrical sockets and protect children from possible dangers in the kitchen by ensuring that the high hook secures the door. Consequently, children have valuable opportunities to play freely.

Children are very well protected from risk of harm because the staff are alert to 'stranger danger.' For instance, all external doors are fitted with a security code and children are never released to adults unless the staff have prior written consent from their parents. Staff are guided by robust policies such as 'child protection' and 'safeguarding children from strangers.' They all demonstrate a clear awareness of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and have up to date guidance to hand so that they can respond quickly to their concerns. As a result, children are safeguarded from the risk of possible harm and their welfare is effectively promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy and have a strong bond with the staff who are consistently kind and attentive in their approach to them. They warmly greet children and talk in soft, comforting tones to reassure the babies and toddlers as they play. Older children enjoy some good humoured banter with the out of school staff and they are very much at ease in each other's company.

Staff gently remind young children to 'be kind' and, as a result, they show exceptional care and consideration for each other. For instance, a young baby beams in delight as another child comes in and immediately crawls towards her. The staff look at children when they speak and constantly chat to them about what they are doing. They speak clearly asking 'Can you roll the ball?... Can you?' to encourage a baby to develop his skills. The high adult to child ratio, particularly when children are asleep, greatly benefits the shy or quieter children as the personal attention helps them to develop confidence.

Children come into the centre eagerly because the staff make extremely effective use of 'Birth to three matters' to provide an exciting programme of new experiences. For instance, babies are captivated by water as it runs through a sieve and excitedly put out their arms to try to catch the flow. Older children relish making 'gloop' and they

mix the cornflour with water so enthusiastically that the mixture splashes their faces. Staff seize the opportunity to suggest that they look in the mirror causing toddlers to demonstrate their confidence and self assurance by exclaiming 'Look at my face! It's all spotty!'

Children are able to build on their existing skills through the staff's superb use of questioning. For example, toddlers are asked 'What shall I wear? Is it cold outside?' to encourage them to learn what clothes they should put on to keep themselves warm. Children have commendable choices within their play and they make an active contribution to each session. For example, babies have plenty of free floor space in which to crawl and explore whilst toddlers share decisions by choosing resources to use within the role play area.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make very rapid progress towards the early learning goals because the established staff teams work exceptionally well together. All staff have a strong knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how young children develop which they use to plan and deliver an impressive programme of challenging activities that are extremely well matched to children's needs and interests. They work closely with parents and carers to discover each child's starting point towards the early learning goals and then continue to rigorously monitor play. All staff record children's 'wow' moments and they are allocated an hour each day to assess their findings to update children's learning stories. Therefore, staff are quickly able to identify gaps in learning as well as support children to do things that go just beyond their capabilities. Consequently, children achieve exceedingly well.

Children make full use of the indoor and outside play space to gain control of their bodies and increase their physical skills. For example, they thoroughly enjoy using the wheeled resources and adventure play equipment, demonstrating excellent spatial awareness as they run around without bumping into each other. Children work extremely well together and happily share the resources. For instance, two boys demonstrate excellent co-operation when they take turns to stack cubes to make a tower. They laugh together when it falls, exclaiming 'Not again!' before they help each other to build it once more. Children show high levels of concentration because the staff make very effective use of praise and encouragement to help them to persevere with challenges. Children take great care with their work, particularly when they use a magnifying glass to observe daffodils and recreate what they have seen.

Children speak very confidently, chatting amongst themselves as they work and making their needs known within play. They wait for adults to finish speaking before they answer and show a pleasing awareness of the listener during conversations. Excellent use of labelling throughout the centre, in words and pictures, helps children to develop their early reading skills and recognise that print carries meaning. In addition, the staff make skilful use of phonics to help children to link sounds to letters. Children use mark making materials confidently and they are developing superb pencil control. For example, many older children form recognisable letters and some can write their names without help. Children thoroughly enjoy being creative. They have outstanding opportunities to be responsible for their work from beginning to end

and they use their imagination very well to print skeletons on to black paper. Children eagerly work with paint and giggle at the tickly feeling as they paint their hands to make a Mother's Day card.

Children's mathematical development is exceptionally well promoted because they use numbers at every opportunity within routine play. For example, they count each other at registration and many can sequence numbers reliably to 18 and beyond. Children calculate competently as the staff challenge children to work out 'How many have we got if we have 9 plus 1?' at snack time. They skilfully match and sequence by shape, number and size when they use linking bricks to repeat mathematical patterns. Children have an excellent awareness of the wider world because they are introduced to festivals from around the world within focussed activities. They also have an impressive range of positive resources to help them to value and respect diversity on a daily basis such as puzzles, posters, books, dolls and role play items.

The staff display an exceptional vitality and commitment to working with children that ensures they maintain a vibrant and happy environment. As a result, children are eager to play and they make outstanding progress in their learning given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel at home in the centre because they are valued and included. The staff have a positive approach and welcome children from all backgrounds and of all abilities. They get down to the children's level when they are speaking and use their names, showing children that they are interested in what they have to say so that children feel good about themselves. Children talk happily to staff about their families or home lives and receive sensitive support. For instance, they are encouraged to talk about their new brother or sister at circle time and, as a result, children show a caring attitude towards each other.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately. They behave extremely well throughout the centre because the staff set clear, age-appropriate boundaries that are consistently applied. Staff let children have time to be cross but they quietly explain why children's actions are inappropriate so that they learn right from wrong. Children of all ages are guided by the calm and polite reactions from the staff such as thanking children for helping them and using praise to reward good behaviour. Older children help to set the out of school club rules to encourage them to be responsible for their own behaviour. However, the negative statements that are displayed are inconsistent with the positive techniques that the staff use and this could confuse children.

Children of all abilities are helped to fulfil their potential because the staff are quick to recognise any developmental delay. They are experienced in providing worthwhile support through working closely with parents and other agencies to develop straightforward individual educational plans to ensure children develop their skills. Excellent use of familiar pictures helps children with special educational needs to participate fully in all activities and make very good progress. Staff collect

comprehensive details from parents to ensure that they can meet children's specific needs. However, some personal information is displayed in the playrooms and confidentiality could be breached as visitors, parents and carers can access these areas.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents are provided with a comprehensive welcoming brochure that explains the six areas of learning covered by the Foundation Stage while the colourful wall displays provide photographic information to reinforce their understanding of the educational programme. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved with their children's learning, for example, they help to choose the weekly topics and they are kept up to date with themes by regular newsletters. Parents have excellent opportunities to share children's progress with the staff. They advise about their child's starting point towards the early learning goals and staff are proactive to ensure that parents continue to monitor and contribute to each child's learning story. Parents exchange information with staff as children are delivered or collected but they are also invited to formally discuss progress towards the early learning goals with their child's key worker. This excellent two way flow of information not only ensures that staff can provide education that is current to children's individual needs, but also helps parents to support learning at home. Parents speak positively and knowingly about the centre. They state that they are 'exceptionally pleased with the variety of play' and feel that 'children have a high learning level.'

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the high quality organisation of the premises and resources together with the outstanding leadership of the centre. All staff have an in depth understanding of the National Standards, the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters', as well as their responsibilities to the children and their carers. The well established staff team enjoys working together and individuals show pleasing support for each other. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and development, therefore, they are proactive to access further training to ensure that their knowledge and skills remain up to date. Staff regularly meet to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of their care and they realise that some books are well used. However, further resources are kept in reserve and stocks are supplemented from the local library to ensure that the resources remain well organised and stimulating to children. As a result, children's welfare, care and learning is effectively promoted.

All legally required documentation is effectively maintained and the sound recruitment procedures ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. Therefore, children's welfare is safeguarded. The robust records of staff, visitors and children's attendance ensure that adults and children are kept safe in an emergency because the managers always know who is present. The commendable range of policies and procedures are consistently applied by the staff and provide comprehensive, accurate guidance to help them to provide good quality care for children. In particular, the worthwhile aims and objectives enable staff to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment in which children thoroughly enjoy themselves.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The roles and responsibilities of the staff members are clearly defined. The proprietor gives exceptional support and guidance to the experienced staff teams. She meets weekly with the managers and room leaders to review the provision and ensure that children's welfare and learning is superbly supported. The centre manager has excellent leadership qualities and is proactive in drawing up an action plan to address any perceived weakness, such as to improve information for parents and to review the planning system. Her commitment to continual improvement, for example, to develop the outside play area, ensures that the already high standards are maintained. Consequently, children are able to develop their personalities within a rich play environment and they make outstanding progress in all areas of their learning.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- review the out of school club rules to ensure that they are consistent with the positive practices in the setting
- ensure staff are aware of the need to maintain privacy and confidentiality when displaying information on children's individual needs.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk